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The Week-end Review

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THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION—The Week-end Review. *Incorporating The New Statesman, The Nation and Athenaeum, Week-end Review.*

THE last phase of the rout in Catalonia is an indescribably pitiful spectacle. For many days the host of refugees, civilians and soldiers, men, women and children, has been creeping up to the Pyrenees, harried by bombs and machine guns, famished and terrorised. It is to the honour of the French people that they are giving asylum to these multitudes, including the troops, whose admission has raised, and will continue to raise, very serious difficulties. But it is unthinkable that the whole burden should fall on France alone, and we hope that this country will be prompt to share it, by giving the fullest possible aid both financially and in any political problems that may arise. Meanwhile the Republican Government have resolved—though there are divided counsels on this—that the war shall go on in the quarter of Spain that is left. There will be general admiration for their courage, and still more for the courage of those who will have to bear the brunt of many more weeks, perhaps months, of fighting and suffering. But few will feel very sanguine about the result. The morale of General Miaja's armies in Madrid and central Spain is, so far as we know, unbroken, but their supplies of food and ammunition and equipment are short, and there seems small chance of their being adequate to a prolonged resistance.

Spain and the Axis

Believing that the back of Republican resistance is broken, all four outside Powers—Germany, Italy, Britain and France—are now busily playing for position in the new Spain. To the democratic Powers it is essential that the strong fortress of Minorca should be in Spanish and not in Italian-German hands, and efforts are being made to induce the defenders of Minorca to surrender quickly before they are attacked by the Axis. According to British calculations, General Franco, urgently in need of money to reconstruct the Spain he has devastated, should come to the British Government for aid. In that case Franco should be content with something less than unconditional surrender and should free himself immediately from his Fascist allies or masters. Germany, the real power behind the Axis drive, has quite other plans and expects Franco to become part of the anti-Comintern bloc. As for the often promised withdrawal of Italian troops, the inspired Signor Gayda explains in the *Giornale d'Italia* that a "political" as well as a "military" victory is wanted before the Italian troops are withdrawn—in plain words, the "Reds," outside and

inside Spain, must be mopped up to the last man, and the Spanish gold and other treasures that have gone to France must be handed over to Franco. These new conditions for the fulfilment of the Duce's pledges have disconcerted, if they have not surprised, Mr. Chamberlain and his friends, and in response to official inquiries Count Ciano has officially disavowed Signor Gayda. And so, officially, Downing Street can continue to believe that Italy's withdrawal is imminent, if only the Republican Government will throw up the sponge, and that Franco will be left in control of a Spain free of any external Fascist influence, but sufficiently dependent on British and French finance. A simple faith!

The Palestine Deadlock

The Palestine Conference, now that it has actually begun, looks no more promising than it did in prospect. The "Round Table" is not one table, but two; the Jewish and the Arab delegations are meeting separately, and there is not even unity on the Arab side, owing to the dispute between the two Palestinian factions—the Mufti's representatives and the Nashashibi "Defence Party." Mr. Chamberlain's opening speeches consisted of nothing more than a formal welcome and the expression of a pious hope that a "compromise on the basis of justice" will be achieved. But what is justice? Arabs and Jews each have a strong case, and neither as yet have shown any sign of willingness to abandon their fundamentally conflicting claims. The Palestinian Arabs, though they may quarrel among themselves, are at one in opposing the Zionist interpretation of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate; and it is unquestionable that they have the backing of other Arab States. We hope that these other Arab States —Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, the Yemen—will exercise a "moderating influence," but it remains to be seen whether their moderation—and any plans (such as a scheme of "federated" States) that may come out of it—will satisfy the Jews. In the last resort the British Government will presumably have to produce its own solution. What that will be we frankly have not any notion, and neither, it seems, has the Government itself.

Mr. De Valera and the I.R.A.

The campaign of terrorism that startled us into reminiscence of the Fenian days has abated since the arrest of a large batch of suspects. Their cases are now *sub judice*, and we can say no more at the moment than that there is evidence of a widespread conspiracy organised by the I.R.A., and that there may be yet more arrests. There has been some surprise here at the silence maintained on the matter by the Government of Eire. The explanation, perhaps, is that Mr. De Valera feared that any public statement by him might make things worse rather than better. But, whether that was so or not, he broke his silence on Tuesday, after a proclamation by the I.R.A. in which they called themselves the Government. He has taken up the challenge promptly, with the introduction of Bills giving the necessary powers to his own, the lawful, Government for the assertion of its authority. Those powers, we hope, will be effective in putting down this maniac movement in Ireland as well as in England. Mr. De Valera, of course, stands firmly for a united Ireland, and believes that the present disunion is the fault of Britain. (The arguments on this point, by the way, are ably and concisely set out in a new pamphlet, *The Partition of Ireland*, by Henry Harrison, *Robert Hale*, 6*d*.) But he believes also in the conclusion that he came to as long ago as 1921, that partition is not to be ended by force, especially when force has no chance of being successful. And it is all to the good that he should emphasise this once more, in the interests of the Irish people themselves and of their relations with the British.

New Jugoslav Cabinet

The change of Government in Belgrade is unlikely to have any significant effect on Jugoslavia's foreign policy; so long as Prince Paul remains Regent the inclination will be towards the anti-Comintern front. Dr. Stoyadinovitch was allowed to fall overboard because his growing unpopularity was becoming a liability to the régime. The immediate cause of the split in his Cabinet which led to the resignations of five Ministers last week-end was his inability to reach a solution of the problem of Croat "Home Rule." Pledged by his election manifesto to give first place to this question in his programme, the late Prime Minister was confronted by a refusal on the part of Dr. Machek, the Croatian leader, to negotiate. The Regent reached the conclusion that Dr. Stoyadinovitch's presence at the head of the Ministry was an insuperable obstacle to an agreement which must be reached if Jugoslavia was to be blessed with "national unity" on semi-totalitarian lines. So Dr. Stoyadinovitch went—a development which is doubtless making General Metaxas wonder how his stock stands in Greece.

War Damage to Property

The position in which Sir John Simon has left the question of war damage to buildings is unsatisfactory—from two separate standpoints. On the one hand, if losses are incurred the burden of compensation is to fall on the shoulders of the whole body of taxpayers, many of whom have no cause to love the landlord class; and no distinction is to be made between the landlord who has equipped his property with fire-fighting and other A.R.P. appliances and the property owner who has neglected these precautions. On the other hand, building societies and other real estate companies are not given any contractual guarantee that their eventual compensation will be nearly proportionate to the damage done. The Uthwatt Committee, whose report was published last week-end, is emphatic that tenants and leaseholders should be released from obligations to repair, or continue payment of rent for, buildings destroyed by bombs. The landlord, thus rightly debarred from having recourse to the tenant, has to rely on the Government's vague assurance that after a war the Treasury would do what it can afford to make good damage. The resulting uncertainty is crippling enterprise in private building. Why a State insurance scheme cannot be formulated has not been convincingly explained.

The Cripps Petition

The Labour Party Executive's reply to Sir Stafford Cripps adds nothing to what was already known. The Executive is against a Popular Front of any sort, disputes the electoral value of any alliance with the Liberals or anybody else, denies Sir Stafford's right to circularise his own constituents—the local Labour Parties—in opposition

to itself, and, in sum, regards Sir Stafford as worse than a nuisance. All that we know already. Meanwhile, Sir Stafford and his friends are launching a national campaign behind a Six Point Petition reminiscent of Chartist appeals. The Petition calls upon the Labour, Liberal and Co-operative Parties to join in a movement designed to displace Mr. Chamberlain. To be effective this appeal must meet with a wide response and there is ample evidence inside the Labour Party of a large volume of protest against Sir Stafford's expulsion. It is being put about quietly in some quarters that the Executive, whatever it may say openly, is really quite prepared to allow local electoral bargains, while opposing a national Popular Front. But this does not appear to be borne out by its refusal to endorse Mr. Pakenham at Oxford; apparently his offence was simply that he was alleged to be engaged in local bargaining with the Liberals.

The Cotton Bill

The Board of Trade has now published the draft of the Cotton Enabling Bill drawn up by the Joint Committee of Cotton Trade Organisations; and a ballot is to be taken among the various interests concerned. The majority of spinning and manufacturing firms appear to favour the Bill; but there is considerable hostility among merchants who dislike the idea of legally fixed prices. The central feature of the scheme is the establishment of a Cotton Industry Board, including three independent salaried members together with twelve representatives of different sections of the industry, including operatives and merchants as well as producing firms. This Board will have to prepare general schemes for research and the promotion of trade; but its principal function will be to report upon sectional schemes for price-fixing or the elimination of redundant capacity drawn up by particular sections of the industry with a view to their compulsory application. In effect, the cotton trade is to have a cartel organisation not unlike that of the coal trade under the 1930 Act, or that of the steel trade under the recent reorganisation scheme. The objection to such schemes is their inherently restrictive character.

Two Millions

A total of well over two millions out of work is startling, even after all allowances have been made for seasonal influences and bad weather conditions and children leaving school at the end of the year. The numbers in employment were actually less by at least 50,000 this January than a year before. This decrease corresponds almost exactly to the decline of employment in the building industry over the same period; and the pivotal position of building activity is once more plainly shown. However, engineering, iron and steel and the smaller metal manufactures all show substantial increases in the numbers unemployed—which means that increased spending on armaments has not sufficed to offset the fall in exports and in home industrial demand. The increase in unemployment as compared with the previous month was substantial in every part of the country, including London, which in absolute numbers headed the list. Next month's figures will probably make a rather better showing, owing to seasonal factors; but it is plain that the decline from the 1937 level is serious, and is not being arrested by rearmament.

Concessions from Sir Samuel

Sir Samuel Hoare agrees that the Official Secrets Acts need amendment. Certainly it will be all to the good if the powers of compulsory interrogation under Section 6 of the 1920 Act can only in future be used on the Attorney General's fiat. This would render unlikely a repetition of the Lewis case, where special powers designed to prevent spying were brought to bear against a Stockport reporter, who had quoted a police circular not even marked "private and confidential." But objections to the Acts go much further than that. According to the letter of the law there is literally nothing which any person employed by the State may learn in the course of his occupation which he may impart to any other person without committing an offence. Sir Samuel has decided with quite admirable common sense to yield to criticisms of the clause in his Criminal Justice Bill, which would give Courts of Summary Jurisdiction the power to impose Borstal sentences. Experts who know the working of the Borstal system and also the limitations of magisterial intelligence were naturally alarmed at this great increase of authority over the lives of young men and women between the ages of 16 and 21. Sir Samuel has agreed to return to the old practice. The chief objection to the existing law on this point was that it involved a period of delay in which adolescents, were made familiar with prison life. This evil, however, should be far less serious now, since Sir Samuel's Bill provides for special remand centres for persons up to 23 years of age.

A.R.P. Dictators

While the Finsbury Borough Council shows how voluntary service can be stimulated by democratic initiative—its A.R.P. scheme has produced a flood of volunteers when the numbers in the rest of the country are falling off—Sir John Anderson still models his conduct upon his Indian experiences. Last week he divulged a scheme for the appointment of 12 regional commissioners, and now he has decided to put all the air-raid wardens in the Metropolitan area under the control of the Police Commissioner. This latter decision, which means turning air-raid wardens into auxiliary policemen, will kill the volunteer spirit in precisely those boroughs which have worked hardest on A.R.P. In defending it Sir John stated that it was not his wish, but was based on the wishes of the boroughs as expressed by the sub-committee on A.R.P. of the standing joint committee. In fact, this sub-committee, on which the least active boroughs were represented, made their recommendations without consulting their constituents, and it is surprising that Sir John in this particular should bow to the will of the majority when he believes it to be wrong. As for the powers of the 12 regional commissioners, they are still uncertain, but Sir John frankly stated in an interview that they would be dictatorial, adding the illuminating comment "Of course, whenever you occupy an area, you always give full powers to the man on the spot." No wonder Mr. Herbert Morrison declined to "occupy" the city whose democratic freedom he is so proud to defend.

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AMERICA AND THE AXIS

THE Führer and the Duce have now warned the French and ourselves that they have claims to make upon us both. Presumably these claims—especially the Italian claims on France—are to be pressed when the completion of General Franco's operations have taught the French that they are now surrounded on three frontiers by the forces of the Axis. Signor Gayda, writing doubtless under inspiration, has dissipated any lingering belief that his master will keep his promise to withdraw his troops after the military conquest of Spain. They will still be retained, he intimates, for political purposes, until, as we interpret his fairly clear words, the Western Powers concede to the Axis a free hand in Spain. The usual preliminaries to negotiation are reported from both countries. In Italy 60,000 key technical troops are called up from the reserves; in Germany some of the older classes are called up for training, and their is an announcement of Air Force "re-organisation"; large bodies of men move southwards through the Czech corridor and mysterious formations are observed in colonial kit. But the most significant preface to these discussions was the Führer's announcement, stripped of all the customary qualifications, that if Italy is involved in war, Germany will fight at her side. These are not preliminaries favourable to reasonable settlement, and if they are not to end either in war or in another Munich, the democratic Powers should at once take the initiative for peace.

Mr. Attlee put the matter correctly when he said last Sunday "the democratic Powers should get together and not await in isolation the next move from the Fascist Powers." Once they have decided what demands and proposals they mean to advance on their side and what points of principle they cannot concede, they should call for a conference at which all the interested parties (not merely the Big Four) should meet. Such a policy would have the advantages of strength as well as those of right, and it would, incidentally, be the one method of ensuring the general sympathy of the United States, which is now overwhelmingly anti-Nazi and also quite reasonably critical of Britain and France, and averse to fighting a war on behalf of their empires.

The first question that arises in considering such a policy is the degree of real solidarity among the democracies. Germany and Italy, the Führer and the Duce would have us believe, are now indissolubly bound, and behind them, in varying degrees of intimacy, are Japan, Hungary and Fascist Spain. We, on the other hand, are still discussing the degrees of intimacy and obligation that constitute our more loosely-knit group. Mr. Chamberlain has just given a pledge to France which is a warning to Italy. Russia with a forcible gesture has answered reports that she might be won over by the Axis to a friendly neutrality. Finally, Mr. Roosevelt has spoken strongly—even though there is some doubt about the scope of his words.

The attitude of America must be a decisive consideration. The whole balance of power is changed if Britain and France can count in the event of attack on the use of the United States as their arsenal, their granary and their oil-well. Both are buying in the United States many hundreds of war-planes; would this have to cease after hostilities broke out? The stiff advocates of a rigid neutrality have the law on their side at present unless the law were quickly repealed. The export of arms would cease on the outbreak of war, nor would credit or tonnage be available under the "cash-and-carry rule" for the finance and transport of other supplies. Americans have resented the brutality of German policy towards the Czechs and the barbarity of the recent pogroms more vocally, if not more deeply, than Englishmen, and on these subjects they were virtually unanimous. None the less, both on political and technical grounds, there was sharp criticism in many newspapers of the partiality of the Administration in permitting the sale of war-planes to the Western Powers. This came not merely from Mr. Roosevelt's habitual critics; some genuine Liberals were opposed to it, on the ground that Mr. Chamberlain, more especially in Spain, is betraying European liberty. They went on to argue that, by assisting Franco indirectly, he is undermining the security of the American Continent, since Latin America, looking to Spain as her cultural centre, is likely to follow her in adopting Fascism. It was to these criticisms that the President replied in his talk to the Military Committee of the Senate. We have no difficulty in accepting his denial of the silly exaggeration that the frontiers of America lie in France. But it is clear that he did dwell on the peril of war in Europe, and that when he affirmed his sympathy for the democracies he must have had practical measures in mind.

What would America do if general war broke out in Europe? Looking first to the great organs of publicity, it must be said that even after the President's talk the majority of the press is still against the present export of war-planes. On the other hand, the expert tests of samples of opinion show that the average man is overwhelmingly against the dictators, and that in his belief the United States would certainly be drawn into any general European war. Whatever the nominal issue may be, two reactions are predictable. The interests of heavy industry and the farmers will both tell against strict neutrality—an argument that would weigh more heavily if we had not defaulted on our debt. Everything, moreover, that is generous in this kindred people would rise in anger with an impulse to help, if London were bombed. We should ourselves hope for helpful neutrality from the start of such a war, but military aid, if it came at all, would be a possibility only after the lapse of some months.

To the solidarity of the democracies Mr. Chamberlain contributed by the assurance that he gave to France on Monday. It was significant in the context of contemporary events. It was manifestly a warning to the Duce before he states his colonial claims against France. It was also an answer to the Führer's declaration that Germany and Italy stand together. But with colonial demands in the offing Mr. Chamberlain was careful not to be too precise. "Any threat to the vital interests of France . . . must evolve the immediate co-operation of this country." What, on a close scrutiny does "co-operation" mean? For example, did Mr. Chamberlain and M. Daladier "co-operate" with Dr. Benes when the vital interests of his country were threatened? Doubtless they would say that they did. Again, it lies with Downing Street, according to this formula, to decide what are "the vital interests of France." Certainly the Rhine frontier, certainly Nice, presumably Corsica. But is the present status in Tunis

(apart from the territorial question) "vital"? And how "vital" are the obligations of France to the Soviet Union under the Eastern Pact? Is anything "vital" in and round the Spanish Peninsula?

Though these essential questions seem still undecided, Mr. Chamberlain's words certainly bring France and Britain more closely together. How much stronger their position would be if the two Western European democracies had not thrown their friends in Spain to the wolves and had been prepared for close relations with the U.S.S.R.! Russia has replied sharply to the reports that she was disposed for a flirtation with Berlin. With a somewhat flamboyant gesture M. Litvinov ended direct diplomatic relations with Hungary on the ground that by her adherence to the anti-Comintern Pact she has become a mere satellite of stronger Powers and has ceased in effect to be a sovereign State. This was a calculated rebuff to Hungary, but it was also a resounding defiance of the Axis. We should infer from this that if the Western Powers could convince Russia that they were disposed at any point to make a stand for the liberty and security of Europe against the Fascist Powers, they could enlist her support. An officer of the German General Staff, writing recently in markedly respectful terms about the Red Army, estimated her strength in the air at 9,000 warplanes, her tanks at 6,000 (ten times the number he attributed to Great Britain) and her man-power at war-strength at 11,000,000 men. So long as the National Government prefers to ignore these colossal resources, it enters any negotiation with half the backing it could command.

The danger now is that the initiative will again be left to the Axis and that when its demands are again pressed we shall be told once more that there is no choice except surrender or war. With the improvement of relations with the U.S.A., the still possible support of the U.S.S.R. and greater solidarity between France and Britain, this need not be the case. If the leaders of the democratic Powers could decide on a joint policy and convince the world that they were capable of standing for something other than the narrowest conception of self-interest, they could still enter into negotiations, if not on terms of equality, at least without humiliation or panic.

RIDICULE, HATRED OR CONTEMPT

THE brief debate in Parliament on the Law of Libel (Amendment) Bill sponsored by Sir Stanley Reed revealed the unpopularity brought upon the press by its own acts. Of the two members who moved the rejection of the Bill, only one troubled to adduce any reasoned arguments against it; the other simply took the line that the vulgar sensationalism, photo-snatching and other intrusions into private lives of which the big-circulation dailies are guilty entitles the public and Parliament to treat all newspapers as outlaws, fit targets for writs fired on any excuse by citizens worthy or unworthy. These views were clearly shared by a large proportion of the House, regardless of the merits of the Bill which newspaper and publishing interests had promoted. Irrespective of the fact that some of its Clauses are open to legitimate criticism, the measure would almost certainly have been defeated on a division. In the event, it was withdrawn by its sponsors on an undertaking by the Attorney-General that a Committee would be set up expeditiously to overhaul what he described, with masterly meiosis, as a "not wholly satisfactory" branch of the law. Relieved of the embarrassment of having to vote for or against greater freedom for a press which sometimes abuses the liberty it ought, in all good Parliamentarians' belief, to enjoy, the House hurriedly adjourned. Let the inquiry proceed, preferably with not over-much expedition.

With the feelings of resentment which the news-gathering activities of columnists and gossip-writers in the popular press arouse sympathy is bound to be felt by any person of average, decent sensibility. What critics of the "high-speed" newspapers forget is that the offences against good taste of which justifiable complaint is made have no more to do with libel than the flowers which collective advertising campaigns persuade us to buy while blooming in the spring. The interviews, real or fictitious, with the condemned murderer's widow on the morning of his execution; the malicious snapshot of the Trade Union leader "lowering" a double Scotch; the cruel telephone bombardment of inquiries why Miss X.'s engagement was broken—no legislation curbs, or could suppress, this scabrous pandering to the *Schadenfreude* of the ignoble whose pennies certain newspapers solicitously woo. The case for reforming the present illogical and anomalous Court practice in regard to libel is not, as critics of the popular press suggest, to protect the pockets of wealthy and irresponsible newspaper proprietors, but to prevent the law being brought into contempt, as it has been brought in recent years, by verdicts given in favour of "gold-digging" plaintiffs, whose success in libel actions has created a profitable trade in legalised blackmail.

It was scarcely realistic on the part of Mr. Silkin, the Labour Member for Peckham, to express the opinion, as he did in the Debate, that 99 per cent. of libel suits were justifiably brought. Cases abound in which damages have been obtained by a plaintiff whose name has been inadvertently utilised for the villain's nomenclature in a novel. (Did not a City gentleman some years ago secure financial compensation because his name was unwittingly given by an advertisement copy-writer to the protagonist of a publicised game playable on the pavement?) Exposure of crooks has cost public-spirited newspapers dear—either because costs were irrecoverable, or because costs were awarded against them through failure to establish one single point in an indictment otherwise substantially proved to be valid and in the public interest. Printers and vendors of journals have been mulcted for pardonable failure to detect an obscure libel for which the person morally responsible could not pay. Plaintiffs, "run" frequently by speculative lawyers on the "no damages, no bill for costs" basis, have been enriched when no material damage or mental anguish had been suffered, or when their characters were such that nothing could really depreciate them. In consequence, not merely are newspapers improperly inhibited from exposing charlatans and swindlers; libel plaintiffs have converted the Courts into a "catch as catch can" arena in which luck is apt to favour the least deserving.

Since Sir Stanley Reed's Bill has been withdrawn, its provisions need not be examined in detail. The promised Committee of Inquiry should find little difficulty in agreeing with its intention to protect authors and publishers from suits based on alleged identification, when no such identification was in the writer's mind. The proposal that the Courts should be directed to apportion damages—e.g., as between writer and publisher—is also commended by commonsense; and few people would quarrel with the recommendation that, in general, costs should not exceed damages. (Rare cases in which an aggrieved plaintiff seeks and obtains a nominal farthing "just to clear his name" can be dealt with by the discretion of the Court.) The chief point in respect to which the Bill now withdrawn would appear to need reconsideration is the question whether a plaintiff in a libel suit should be required to go into the witness box, prove that he has suffered material damage, and stand cross-examination as to his general character.

Instances can be imagined in which an ex-convict, who had led for many years a blameless life, was the victim of a gross

libel. Is it right that the defendants, in mitigation of damages, should be entitled to rake up the whole of the plaintiff's irrelevant past? Or again, is it fair to demand that a plaintiff must prove that his business has suffered, or that he has been expelled from his club, before he can obtain compensation against a newspaper which has maliciously or negligently attributed to him a conviction for cruelty to animals? The pendulum might easily be swung to an extreme equally objectionable from the standpoint of the individual citizen whose character is aspersed. What the Committee must clearly do is to endeavour to find—and its task will not be free from legal snags—a *via media* which will suppress frivolous suits by "gold-diggers," and yet will protect the victims of malicious or irresponsible mud-slinging. The situation would be met in the case of inadvertent misstatements by enacting that corrections should be published promptly, with equal prominence. That done, it is difficult to see what ethical grounds for financial compensation could exist. In cases in which defamation—for reasons warranted or unwarranted—is clearly deliberate, the defendants should fairly be allowed a wider latitude than at present for establishing justification in the public interest, but this latitude should stop short of unlimited roving cross-examination on issues not germane to the libel alleged. No responsible journalist would seek to obtain from Parliament license to indulge more freely in hurtful criticism or disparaging innuendo; but, considering the extraordinary interpretations which have been placed by the Courts on "ridicule, hatred or contempt," the Parliamentary Committee might be well advised to inquire into the advisability of all libel actions being tried without juries.

JOHN GALLOWAY

LONDON DIARY

I SHOULD never have expected to be cheered up by an A.R.P. exhibition, but that was what happened when I spent one morning this week in Finsbury Town Hall. For here at last is a Borough Council which has had the sense to invite one of the most brilliant of our younger firms of architects to tackle A.R.P. as a problem of modern architectural and engineering technique. Mr. Lubetkin with his associates of Tecton was responsible for the Gorilla House and the Penguin Pool at the Zoo, two of the unquestionably successful modern structures in London. These architects have now evolved the Finsbury scheme, and talking to Mr. Lubetkin one felt a sense not only of keen excitement but of relief from impotent fear. Obviously their plans are experimental, but so is any medical treatment when it is first evolved. And the medical analogy is not far-fetched. Instead of trudging along the routine road of traditional defence, Tecton has treated A.R.P. as a new architectural and social problem which can and must be solved by developing an entirely new technique of construction, and the Finsbury scheme is the first detailed example of applied science in the defence of the civil population. It offers almost complete security at £10 5*s.* per head, which, in a borough like Finsbury and with a 70 per cent. grant, means loan charges involving a 2½d. rate for 60 years. No wonder Alderman Riley, the leader of the Labour group on the Council, is pleased. His scheme is now in the hands of the Ministry, and when I saw him eating a hurried lunch of steak and chips in one of the Town Hall offices, he had already persuaded the Mayor of an adjacent Borough to see if the scheme could be adapted to other localities.

* * *

For the exhibition is not merely a display of one scheme for one area. It is one of the most brilliant pieces of popular education which I have seen. With the aid of a series of plans and humorous cartoons it explains the nature of the danger, works out a coefficient of danger volume and tests the efficiency of all types of surface and deep shelter in terms of this formula. Tecton refuses dogmatically to assert that there is an ideal type of shelter which can be uniformly employed, and the Tecton technique can be varied to suit any conditions. The real value of the exhibition is that it analyses the problem for the first time in precise and measurable terms. By these means it is able to show that the trenches recommended by the Home Office have a danger coefficient of 76 and cost £2 2*s.* a head, whereas a scientifically designed trench shelter reduces the coefficient to 20 while increasing the cost by only £1 16*s.* Another point which it demonstrates is the inadequacy of the data available. In four months, an accurate map of drains, water, electricity and gas cables (many previously uncharted), a daytime and night-time census of the population, an estimate of street crowds and a survey of basements have been made—the last to schedule them as danger spots and not, as in other areas, as "shelters." In fact, a firm of architects has carried out a social survey which must make Finsbury the best-mapped borough in London.

* * *

To write in this way of the Finsbury scheme sounds excessively enthusiastic. But I am sure that anyone who visits the exhibition will feel as I do. It should encourage the Air Raid Defence League, which has been started by an independent group, including Sir Arthur Salter and Mr. Ralph Wedgwood. This League, whose concern is to put some sense into our civilian defence, seems to me a good and democratic affair, but I gather that for some reason or other Labour leaders find themselves unable to co-operate with it. The niceties of Labour tactics are past my understanding. Mr. Morrison speaks on A.R.P. at the Albert Hall with all the Tory big-wigs and defends himself on the ground that it would be discourteous to refuse; he speaks at Finsbury and gives his blessing to the A.R.P. exhibition. But when a non-party movement is started in order to force the Home Office into the right kind of activity, Labour stands aside, although efficient civilian defence is one of the best means of preventing war by making the lightning stroke an impossibility.

* * *

There is, after all, chivalry even in politics. Sir Stafford Cripps continues to address Labour meetings, and his first concern is still what it always was, to make recruits for the movement that has expelled him. He spoke last week-end at North Shields. This party when he went on its platform had about 300 members. When he left it he had enlisted for it 87 new members. Such an item of news, if the *Daily Herald* had the candour to print it, would be answer enough to its somewhat sordid personal attacks.

* * *

I have every sympathy with the police in their job of controlling not only the London traffic, but also the London demonstration, but when all allowances are made it does look as if some of the policemen on duty round the House of Commons and Piccadilly Circus on January 31st behaved outrageously. It was the night of the debate on Spain, and not only was there a large queue waiting to lobby M.P.s, but there were demonstrations for Spain as well. I have studied the long dossier of evidence collected by the Council for Civil Liberties. It claims to be for the most part evidence not of demonstrators, but of unattached citizens who give their names and addresses and are willing to stand by it. According to these reports, the demonstrators were marching in an orderly way past the entrance to the House, when they were herded up against the standing queue by mounted police, and then charged by policemen with batons and pushed towards Vauxhall Bridge. In Whitehall 30 young men and women who were walking quietly towards Trafalgar Square are said to have been attacked with truncheons. One witness, a lady who happened to be coming out of the Monseigneur Cinema, saw two young mounted policemen, without any provocation, ride their horses on to the pavement and create the disorder they were there to prevent. She contrasts the police treatment of poorly dressed people with the scrupulous courtesy shown to her. She wore a mink coat. But far the most serious evidence relates to the political attitude of certain policemen, drawn, I think,

from units not usually employed in the West End. One well-dressed man, who was in the Commons queue, was told on protesting: "You shouldn't be with this mob"; another bystander in Regent Street declares that he heard a policeman shouting: "Go back to Spain, you Jewish bastard," and another reports that he saw an officer strike a woman saying: "Go back to Whitechapel, you Jewish whore!" This evidence cannot be simply brushed aside. Of course no such behaviour was authorised by police headquarters; but it looks as if a section of the police on duty that night regarded anyone who wished to interview his M.P. or demonstrate for Spain as an alien unworthy of civil treatment. As the police authorities cannot approve of these tactics, they should themselves welcome an inquiry.

* * *

For most of us there is a country which particularly excites our romantic longings, a country that we may even fear, as well as yearn, to visit, for fear of disillusionment. I believe that many besides myself have this special feeling for Indonesia—Cambodia, Malacca, Java and Bali, an island which world cruises have still not spoiled. From what I hear the Javanese dances that are being performed next Monday and Tuesday evenings at the Phœnix Theatre stimulate dangerously this deplorable desire to escape into a happier world. Miss Beryl de Zoete, than whom there is no better authority, calls Javanese dancing "the most exquisitely refined living traditional dance art in the world." The dancers are fifteen Javanese princes—for in Java dancing rather than opening hospitals or christening ships is a principal function of royalty—and fifteen Balinese. The performances are in aid of the International Peace Hospital in China.

* * *

A curious example of academic censorship reaches me from the London School of Hygiene, one of the schools of the University of London, the Chairman of whose Board of Management is Mr. Neville Chamberlain. A short time ago the list of periodicals taken in the Staff Common Room was revised. Among the suggested additions was the *Daily Worker*, which received wide support and was put on the list, although some members of the staff expressed themselves strongly against it. A fortnight ago, the Common Room Committee, a sub-committee of the School Council, met and decided that the *Daily Worker* should be discontinued, but gave no reasons for their decision. As the subscription did not expire until the end of the week, the question was raised, what should be done with the remaining issues? Solemnly it was decided that these should be placed in the waste-paper basket. A petition for the restoration of the paper has been organised and has received considerable support from among the staff and research workers at the School. The fate of the paper is still unsettled, but its return, I am told, is doubtful. In Germany, offending reading matter is burnt in the streets; in Catholic countries it is placed on the Index; in a school of the liberal University of London it is placed by decree in the waste-paper basket.

* * *

In dismissing five actors for the offence of making political jokes, Dr. Goebbels explains that while humour of the Nazi variety is good, wit is a dangerous solvent that cannot be tolerated in the Reich. One recalls various Nazi jokes—the dispatch, for instance, of a husband's ashes in a brown paper parcel to his wife who had been asking that he might be allowed to return home after arrest. No, humour and wit are not the same. Yet I suspect that in private Dr. Goebbels enjoys witticisms that he would not approve of for the general public. I am sure that he appreciates unconscious wit like that of the enthusiastic supporter of Franco who explained the other day that the Spaniards will never allow foreigners to remain on Spanish soil. "It is utterly contrary to their character," he said. "I was talking only yesterday to a friend from Gibraltar who was particularly insistent on this point!"

The Society for the Protection of Science and Learning, which has associated with it the most distinguished scholars of this country, has a fine record in finding positions for teachers and research workers who have been expelled from Germany and Austria. There is now a new stream of "intellectuals" of all kinds from Italy and Czecho Slovakia, and, presumably, there is to be a stream from Spain. A national appeal for funds to finance a new programme for dealing with this need was inaugurated by the Society for the Protection of Science at a conversazione given last Tuesday by the Royal Society and the British Academy. The Arden Society launched a similar appeal at a dinner on Friday at which the Archbishop of York was the principal speaker. But these appeals have so far reached limited audiences, and those readers of the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION who were not present, but who are in sympathy with the aims of these two bodies, may be glad to know that the address of the Honorary Treasurer of the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning is 6 Gordon Square, W.C.1; whilst that of the Arden Society is 14 Dulverton Mansions, Gray's Inn Road, W.C.1.

* * *

A parson in a northern town told me of a colossally stout woman who came to him for assistance. She explained that she was getting the dole, but that it was not sufficient. The parson looked at her figure rather doubtfully and before he could say anything, she hurried on. "You see the fair season is over and I am the fat woman; so I need something to keep me in training for my working months." CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to X.Y.Z.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

Several M.P.s wanted to know yesterday why Major-General Sir Reginald Ford, Chief Divisional Food Control Officer for London and the Home Counties, lives in Brussels.

When a *News Chronicle* reporter 'phoned Sir Reginald Ford last night, he said:

"There is no reason why I shouldn't live here in Belgium. I like the country very much. If London wants me, I can reach Whitehall by plane in just under 2½ hours.

"In peace time my job is not important and I have little to do. If war breaks out that's a different matter. Of course I should come home at once.

"I am in touch with my office three or four times a week and reports from my department are sent on to me at once."

Sir Reginald Ford is 70. He retired from the Army in 1920.—*News Chronicle.*

To create an anti-moral effect on enemy bombers, why not co-ordinate and attach all our gun shots (sportsmen and keepers) to the observer corps and arm them with a light weapon effective up to 2,000 to 3,000 feet against enemy bombers? Properly controlled they would provide a devastating menace to the low bomber. I can see many a week-end party assembling on good beats.—Letter from Air Commodore P. F. M. Fellowes in the *Times.*

Complaint that neither Hereford city nor county possesses a single gas mask, except for demonstration purposes, has elicited the information that the supply was sent to Hertfordshire by mistake.—*Birmingham Post.*

Everybody must have been filled with admiration for the restraint shown by the B.B.C. at the time of the crisis; but since then it does seem inclined to yield to the temptation to dramatise the news. It frequently happens, as Mrs. Blagden writes, that one goes to bed almost convinced of immediate catastrophe and is only reassured by searching the pages of the *Times* for the alarming statement in vain.—Letter in the *Times.*

Barnett, the Victoria and Australia Test wicket-keeper, has joined the Militia. In a broadcast he explained why.

"It would be a tragedy," he said, "if anything happened to prevent Test matches being played. Therefore we must see that Australia is a force with which other Powers must reckon seriously before tackling."—*Evening News.*

CLASS-WAR AND EMPIRE DEFENCE

MANY people are puzzled by Mr. Chamberlain's policy of helping Fascism to conquer Spain. Whether regarded from the point of view of its inhumanity and duplicity, or as the sabotage of Imperial defence, the policy seems equally inexplicable. Such people will find a striking and illuminating parallel in the story of the Coalition Government's intervention in Russia in 1917-20.

To this day official explanations (e.g., Mr. Lloyd George's in his *War Memoirs*) of Russian intervention, insist that it was a policy of "honest" vacillation, muddle and drift, begun by people whose only concern was to get on with the war against Germany. Any idea of class-war or "taking sides in Russian internal affairs" is explicitly repudiated as a motive.

There is no doubt of the personal sincerity of those who proffer these explanations. They really believe what they are saying. But so much evidence has since been published, in the shape of Cabinet minutes, official despatches, and the memoirs of those who took part in these events, that one can now say with certainty that these explanations are not in accordance with the facts, but merely represent an extreme example of wishful thinking and self-deception.

These are the facts. When the Bolsheviks came into power one section of the Cabinet wished to treat them immediately as "avowed enemies." But the majority on December 9th, 1917, adopted what Mr. Lloyd George calls one of Balfour's "most memorable State papers," pleading for what he described as a "deliberate policy of drift." (Balfour was then Foreign Secretary). On December 21st, 1917, the Cabinet adopted a further Balfour Memorandum elaborating this "deliberate policy." This Memorandum was communicated to the French Government and became the basis for Allied policy in Russia. It contained the following two essential points:

> 1. We should represent to the Bolsheviks that we have no desire to take part in any way in the internal politics of Russia, and that any idea that we favour a counter-revolution is a profound mistake. Such a policy might be attractive to the autocratic Governments of Germany and Austria, but not to the Western democracies or America. . . .
>
> 2. At the same time as they tried to make the Bolsheviks believe these assurances, the Allies were to supply: "Money to reorganise the Ukraine, to pay the Cossacks and the Caucasian forces, and to subsidise the Persians. . . . Besides finance, it is important to have agents and officers to advise and support the provincial Governments and their armies. It is essential that this should be done as quietly as possible so as to avoid the inputation—as far as we can—that we are preparing to make war on the Bolsheviks."

Clearly the word "drift" is a misnomer when applied to this "deliberate policy." It was intervention on the side of the Whites and against the Reds camouflaged to look like "drift," "muddle," "vacillation," etc. No doubt there was plenty of all three when it came to applying the policy, because of the reactions of public opinion, the unexpected strength of the Reds and the incompetence of the Whites and dissensions in the Cabinet. But at bottom, what looked like "muddle" and "drift" was a case of "Oh, what a tangled web we weave when we practice to deceive."

The interesting point is that they persisted in the policy of camouflaged intervention swelling to open intervention, in spite of repeated and emphatic warnings from their man on the spot, Mr. Bruce Lockhart, that the Whites had no support in the country, were concerned solely with smashing the Revolution and restoring their own property rights, and would accept support from the Germans just as readily as from the Allies for the purpose. Not only Mr. Lockhart but all the Allied diplomats and officers left in Moscow urged compliance with Lenin's offer in February-March, 1918, to accept Allied assistance in training and equipping the Red Army in order to resist further German aggression. This was at the very time that German troops were being concentrated in the West for the great March offensive that almost shattered the Allied front. The Allied High Command were at their wits end to find some way of stopping the movement of German troops from East to West. And yet, even in this extremity, and although it brought us within an ace of losing the world war, our Government clung to their policy of backing the Whites.

Their motives were almost explicitly putting class-war against the Reds before winning the world war against Germany: "On January 17th, 1918," says Mr. Lloyd George, "Mr. Balfour expressed to the War Cabinet the opinion that from a purely Foreign Office point of view, there would be great advantages in cutting off all relations with the Bolsheviks. The latter had broken their treaty with the Allies, had repudiated their debts to us, and were openly trying to raise revolutions in all countries."

On January 22nd, according to the War Cabinet minutes, Mr. Balfour observed that:

> From the point of view of postponing a separate peace between Russia and Germany, and stopping the Germans getting supplies out of Russia, it would appear that the Bolsheviks were more likely to effect such a policy than any other party in Russia. The Bolsheviks, however, appeared determined to spread what he described as "passionate propaganda" in this country, and also in Germany. . .
>
> Sir George Buchanan said he would sooner see a rupture than allow Bolshevist propaganda on a large scale in this country, as such propaganda was dangerous, and attractive to those who had nothing to lose. He thought it was clear that the Germans would like to see a rupture between us and the Bolsheviks, and would like our representatives at Petrograd to be withdrawn, in order to give them a clear field.

These views, on which the Cabinet based its Russian policy, are not much different from those of the British Minister in Oslo at the time. "He was," says Mr. Lockhart, "an extreme Conservative, who would rather have lost the war than run the risk of social upheaval in England."

On July 16th, 1918, Balfour submitted a memorandum to the Cabinet which contained the following:

> The fact is that an autocratic system is not only repulsive to Englishmen of all shades of opinion, but that the re-establishment of Russian autocracy would, so far as I can judge, be a misfortune for the British Empire. Autocracy and militarism naturally go together; and it is almost inconceivable that, if the Czar could be re-established, Russia would not again become a purely military Empire. If so, she would inevitably be a danger to her neighbours, and to none of her neighbours so much as ourselves. . . . In my opinion, moreover, a restored Czardom would be more dangerous to British interests than the Czardom which has just vanished; for it would almost certainly be dependent upon Germany.

Nevertheless, the policy of backing the Tsarist Generals and Cossack war-lords continued—on the basis of a sort of *de facto* truce and division of labour between the German Army in the Baltic provinces and the Ukraine and the Allied naval forces in the Baltic and Black Sea. The Allied Governments and the German Government, although fighting their world war in the West, were not far in the East from what Mr. Lockhart describes as the typical view both of the Russian and of the British bourgeoisie in Russia:

> That we should make peace as soon as possible in order, in alliance with Germany, to . . . re-establish order in Russia, suppress Bolshevism and restore to the bourgeois his property.

The threat to the social order since the great slump has been quite as great as it was in the closing year of the world war and the first two years of peace. Ever since 1931 a defeat for Japan at the hands of the anti-Imperialist Chinese, or for Italy by the anti-colonial Abyssinians, or by the Spanish workers and peasants, would have meant a Fascist Great Power crumbling in revolution. Moreover, this defeat could not have been encompassed—just as Germany could not have been prevented from partitioning and subjugating Czecho Slovakia—without the co-operation of the U.S.S.R. (and, in the Far East, of the U.S.A.).

Toryism and plutocracy would not be in power to-day in this country if Fascist aggression at any time since 1931 had been defeated by collective action, on behalf of such victims of aggression and in such company. They know, or at least their class-feeling guides them instinctively to that conclusion, that the cause they are alone concerned to defend—i.e., the class-rule of the plutocracy—can survive only by sacrificing

civilisation to Fascism. The more we are afraid and ashamed and bewildered, the easier it is for Toryism and plutocracy to cling to power—until the deluge.

The important point to realise is that their policy to-day is the same. "Non-intervention" in Spain in particular has also been a deliberate policy of duplicity. This time there was a division of labour with the Fascist Powers and their leadership in the world reaction has been accepted by Mr. Chamberlain. The technique for fooling public opinion has been more elaborate.

Like their predecessors in the last war, they want to have it both ways. Having made the Empire indefensible on class-war grounds, they are arming to fight for colonies against the hopeless odds they have themselves created. They have kept Toryism and plutocracy afloat hitherto on the blood of the Chinese, Abyssinian and Spanish peoples, and on the wreckage of civilisation. They are now heading for a grand smash, in which they will pour out the blood of millions of British men, women and children and reduce England to a shambles and a smoking ruin in order to fight for their right to go on exploiting African natives. And they will certainly try during the war to consolidate their class-rule at home.

This blind determination of the governing class to have it both ways puts the common people and particularly organised Labour, without whose co-operation no Government can fight a war, in a tragic dilemma. Either we resign ourselves to being cannon-fodder in a war which we ourselves say the Government are making inevitable and in conditions in which the end can be only chaos, or else we take all the risks at this time of peril of refusing to accept conscription in any form, in peace or in war, until we have a Government with a foreign policy we can trust. That course would mean a moral revolution, by the common people insisting for the first time in history that their interests and ideals must be the basis for national unity on foreign policy and defence, for they refuse to agree to any other basis.

I very much fear the leadership of the Labour Party have impaled themselves on the cannon-fodder horn of the dilemma. For myself, I prefer to take my stand on Mr. Attlee's statement to the Brighton Conference in 1935, that if Labour were weak and foolish enough to be led up the garden path of Imperialism again we should deserve our fate, and his statement at Edinburgh in 1936 that if Labour unconditionally yielded to all the demands made by the Government in the name of defence we should end by accepting Fascism at home in order to prepare for fighting Fascism abroad.

K. ZILLIACUS

THE SKY IS BLUE

"THE SKY IS BLUE." This was the heading above a leading article in a newspaper on Sunday. It referred to the European situation. I could not see the European situation from the window of the cottage in which I was spending the week-end; but there was no denying that the sky was blue above Surrey. The sun was so warm that it was difficult to believe that it was ice not yet melted that gave the oily appearance to the surface of the pond on the other side of the road. When I opened the door into the garden, a bee—made curious, perhaps, by its first sight of a human being—swung up again and again for a closer view of my face and neck. One yellow crocus was already in bloom, responsive to the first real sun of the year. There were three snowdrops out in the cracks of the pavement beside the draw-well. To escape suddenly like this from the imprisonment of winter in the first week of February—had it ever happened before? It had—often. But always when it does happen, it seems as though it were for the first time.

On such a day, even a lazy man is tempted to go for a walk—to explore the world within a short radius of the house in which he sleeps. The time of the singing of birds is at hand, but, though the sky is blue, it is not yet warm enough to sit watching and listening to the more agreeable inhabitants of the earth from a deck chair. The long low range of hills, with the procession of Christmas trees following its wavy outline, and with patches of winter-reddened bracken showing in the treeless spaces, was tempting to a pedestrian, but, as a rule, I find it easy to resist the temptation of hills, holding that they look best from below; and I persuaded the friend who was with me to take the most level of the roads in that part of the country. The choice was from my point of view a lucky one. We had scarcely passed the end of the common when, with a quicker eye than mine, he caught sight of a bullfinch and its mate feeding among the buds in a hawthorn hedge. According to Coward, the bullfinch—or *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*—"is so retiring at most times that it has a false reputation for rarity"; but, so far as I am concerned, the rarity of the bullfinch has always been genuine enough. I have a clear memory, indeed, of every place in which I have seen a bullfinch, so seldom has this happened—though I have seen one as near London as Ken Wood—and always, when I have seen one, I have felt as if I had arrived on a magic carpet in some strange country—a Japan, perhaps, that exists only in the mind. (We used to think of Japan mainly as a country of beautiful birds and flowers.) And this small bird, with its sunset of a breast glowing in the light of the sun that was shining from the afternoon sky, its brilliant whiteness, and its black head, converted England into an island such as Maeldune might have seen on the happiest day of his voyage.

Horticulturally regarded, the bullfinch is, I believe, an enemy. But then, if we think of nothing but our farms and gardens we can easily discover reasons for looking on nearly every living thing as an enemy. The jay with the lovely feather is as suspect as the harsh-voiced rook. The magpie, all elegance in black and white, is hated like the commonest pea-devouring sparrow. The blackbird's song does not save it, nor do the starling's glossy crown and lustrous neck prevent it from being counted a nuisance. Some time ago a friend of mine was hanging out a coconut in the garden when the gardener, with a look of pain protested: "You're not going to encourage them birds!" "Oh," she said; "I don't think tits can do much harm." "All birds," said he, "do harm in a garden." Even if this were true—which I very much doubt—most of us, I fancy, would rather go without a few utilities than be doomed, during our sojourns in the country, to a birdless garden. One bullfinch, his spindleberry-pink breast—and how spacious it is!—richly alight in the light of the sun, is well worth one or two apple-trees even to those who love apple-trees. So, at least, I thought as I watched one feeding, unperturbed by the motor-cars that passed, and as indifferent to my friend and myself as he was to his mate. My friend and I, too, it must be admitted, were indifferent to his mate. Most of us in our attitude to bullfinches, have a regrettably anti-feminist bias. The bold colours of the male are not to be resisted.

Farther on, the wide fields rose in banks up the hillside, and across one of them a flock of sheep slowly advanced beside their shadows, nibbling grass that seemed almost too short to be gripped by teeth. Two tiny lambs were among them, not even of an age to bound as to the tabor's sound, old enough only to bleat like mechanical toys. In a far corner of the field a magpie was walking, its whiteness, when it turned sideways, as bright as a distant window lit up by the sun. There was nothing in nature, indeed, that did not reflect the transforming light of the day. The blades of the grass were gleaming. The branches of the bare trees were gleaming, awakened into a world of sunshine and of peace. A small boy passed along the road with primroses in his hand. The young honeysuckle leaves in the hedge were a lively green. The buds on the pussy-willow were already white with down. There was no mark here of the disaster of winter—a winter so bitter that fifty skylarks had gathered in one small garden in the neighbourhood, many of them to die of cold and starvation. Under

the blue sky all this now seemed as far away as the Flood or the Sack of Rome or the Great War.

Perhaps, however, if one reflected, one did notice some signs of the hardness of the winter. After a gentler winter the birds would have been more numerous and noisier under such a spread of sunshine. There were fewer thrushes here than in Hampstead, and, though the great tit see-sawed his song in the trees and hedges, the blue tit seemed to have become a rare bird. The only wagtail I saw was sitting on a telephone wire, preening his feathers like a sick swallow. This is certainly a cold part of the country. Local rumour has it that during the long frost even the hot-water-bottles froze in the beds.

Still, as everybody said, the frost would do good. That is one of the reassuring things about life—that everything uncomfortable does good. Even so, the uncomfortable attracts me, not while it is in process of doing good, but only when the process of doing good is over. The truth is, Sunday was such a day that it was possible for an hour or two to look at the world without a single thought of the past or future. A silver aeroplane flew across the sky: it, too, reflected the universal peace of the sun. The pollard willows were mirrored in the still waters of a stream. The sound of a rill pouring down under the road was as melodious as any bird's song. The catkins were hanging from the hazels. A missel-thrush sang from a high tree. And all the earth was gilded. There was nothing to remind one of the imperfection of this small corner of the universe, except, perhaps, the large-lettered notice on the gate of a farm: "Please dip your boots." I do not know whether I was right, but I took this to mean that, even in this perfect moment of time, man was in fear of foot-and-mouth disease for his beasts.

If one was not a farmer, however, everything conspired to make one believe that it was a very good world indeed—three whole miles of it and a whole hour and a half of it. A field was green with winter-sown wheat. There was evidently, not only a good time present, but a good time coming. My friend discovered three short-necked primroses and carried them home as a surprise for an invalid—an eggcupful of spring to bring light into the cottage. Arrived there and settled into an armchair, I would not have changed places with the inhabitant of any other century—or of any other year than the year 1939. I turned on the wireless set and chose a station at random. Once more I was fortunate. Children were singing—singing as sweetly as any choir of birds, as any rain-fed stream wandering among grass and stones. How happy they sounded—with the natural happiness of childhood on which the future casts no shadow! It was a German song, and it was good to know that even in Germany children live in a world on which the sun shines—a careless, innocent world, free from calamity. When the song was over, one gathered, however, that they were not ordinary German children but refugee children torn from their German homes. A girl in a sweet voice told in charmingly foreign English what was being done for them. Again they sang, and the song was in tune with the world of the bullfinch and the willows reflected in the stream and the green of the young corn. But even so, the perfection of the world was broken, shattered. It had become a world teeming with fugitives—children in flight with their fleeing mothers in the east and in the west. There were parts of it in which even the infant in its mother's arms was not safe from the Herods of our time, who will not allow human beings to be happy in the sunshine. That is one of the puzzling things about the world—why any strong man should take pleasure in playing the part of Herod and why the mass of mortals, who, after all, want so little to make them happy, should allow him to do so. One would have imagined that the spectacle, or even the thought, of one child's sufferings, of one mother's, would have turned him from his purpose. . . .

The sky had become dark when I went out to the Green Man, and frost was settling on the palings and on the grass.

Y. Y.

NIGHTMARE NOSTRUM

(Acknowledgments to the Poet Laureate)

SUBMARINES from Kiel and Friedrichshafen
Plunging through the deep seas at the dolphin's pace,
Slipping under Biscay,
Past Gibraltar,
Headed for Morocco and the Fascist base.

Italy's destroyers strung across the trade-routes,
Cruisers and torpedo-boats on sleepless guard,
Off Sardinia,
Majorca, Ceuta,
From Sicily to Africa the sea-gates barred.

France's battle-cruisers dodging out of Toulon,
Darting from Ajaccio, and brought up short,
Severed from Bizerta,
Algiers, Tunis,
Syria and Beirut and Jibuti Port.

Battleships of Britain with merchant convoys
Bottled in the narrows by the Axis Fleet,
Jostled out of Malta,
Cyprus, Haifa,
Suez, Alexandria and the Red Sea beat.

SAGITTARIUS

Miscellany

ELECTRICITY IN COMMON

By MICHAEL ZOSHCHENKO (translated by Elisaveta Fen)

To have your own private flat is, no doubt, a sign of petty bourgeois mentality.

It is better to live as one large friendly communal family than to shut yourself inside your domestic fortifications.

You ought to live in communal flats. There, everything's public. There's always someone to talk to, to ask advice from. And to have a fight with, too, if you feel so inclined.

Of course, there are some drawbacks. For instance, electricity causes a lot of inconvenience. You don't know what is your share of the electric bill. Or how much you have to ask from the others.

No doubt, when our industry fulfils another Five-Year plan, and when America walks on tip-toe in our presence, then it will be possible to fix up every tenant with his own electric meter. Or even with two meters each, if necessary. And the meters themselves will keep count of the electricity consumed. Then, life in our tenement flats will become much brighter.

Meanwhile, we have to put up with a great deal of discomfort.

For instance, there are nine families in our house. But there's only one electric cable and one meter. At the end of the month we have to pay the bill. And then, naturally enough, many misunderstandings take place, and sometimes even fighting.

You might say, why not charge per electric lamp?

Not a bad idea, that. But we have all sorts of tenants. A decent man lights his lamp only for a minute or two, in order to undress or to catch a flea. A man without conscience would keep his lamp burning till midnight for no reason at all. And some intellectual fellow will stare at his book literally till one o'clock in the morning, without considering the common interest. And it is not improbable that he sticks in a brighter lamp on the sly. And he reads his algebra as if in daylight.

The same intellectual might go as far as using a plug and an electric saucepan to boil water, or to cook macaroni at night. You don't know what to expect from this type of man!

Once we had a tenant—a docker—who went off his head on

this very subject. He stopped going to bed altogether, and spent his time finding out which tenants read books during the night, and which cooked macaroni in electric saucepans. All through the night he kept calling now at one flat, now at another. And he said he would bash a fellow's head in with an axe, if he found him using extra electricity. So that the supervision over our electric consumption was very effective in his day. But he could not keep it up for long, and went off his head. I'm a little surprised that no other tenants went off their heads as a result of his supervision.

After he had been removed to hospital the real trouble started. With his supervision our bill had never been much more than twelve roubles a month. Sometimes, in a bad month, it was as much as thirteen. But as soon as the fellow was removed, up it went to sixteen roubles.

Sixteen! How's that? What filthy dog dared use so much? How did he do it? An extra strong lamp, or a plug, or a saucepan, or what?

There was much swearing among the tenants, but the bill had to be paid.

The next month, sixteen roubles again.

Some honest tenants then declared:

"This is not fair. We economise like misers while others take no notice of what they use. Well, then we won't take any notice either. We also will use plugs, and cook macaroni with electricity."

In a month's time we received a bill for nineteen roubles.

The tenants groaned, but paid nevertheless. And then a complete demoralisation followed. No one bothered to turn out lights. Everyone read algebra till midnight. And plugs were stuck into every hole.

The next month the bill came for twenty-six roubles.

There was no stopping them after that.

In a word, when our monthly bill reached the figure of thirty-eight roubles we were compelled to cut off power and light. The tenants refused to pay. Only one intellectual begged that the cable should not be cut, and clutched at it desperately, but he was ignored. The cable was cut.

Of course, this is only a temporary measure. We are not against electrification. At the general meeting of the tenants that was made quite clear. Some time we shall apply to be connected again. But at present we are much more comfortable as it is. Spring-time is not far off. Days are drawing out. Then the summer will come. The birds will sing. We don't need artificial light in the summer. And in winter we shall see. In winter, we might apply to be connected again. Or we shall arrange for supervision, perhaps. Or for something else.

But meanwhile, it's nice to have a rest. These large communal families take some effort to run.

REFUGEES

(Here are two of many reports from correspondents on the conditions of refugees.)

OF the 6,000 Austrian refugees in France, 80 to 85 per cent. are Jews, 10 per cent. Militant Catholics, and the rest a "Mischehe"—of mixed marriages. And of this total 4,000 are in Paris. The rest are scattered about the country; for very soon after the Anschluss a dispersion of the Austrian refugees from Paris into the provinces—if only because there were already 400,000 foreigners in the Capital—was undertaken almost entirely by police action, backed up by, among other people, the Trade Unions. At the Préfecture the refugees received papers, ordering them to take up residence anywhere in France except in five, later in eleven, departments—on pain of a *réfus de séjour*.

The result was that many fled to Nice, Marseilles, Lyon, Bordeaux; while some, refusing to obey the order, were taken to the Paris prisons. Others are in prison, not because they lack passports, but because they crossed the frontier illegally, without a visa; while some have been imprisoned for being given a *réfus de séjour*, and failing to leave the country. (Needless to say, they could not leave the country.)

Of the remaining very large majority in the capital, some have to report weekly, some fortnightly, others once a month, to the *Préfecture;* and they go each time in dread that this visit may be their last. Although, of all the sufferings the refugee has to undergo, his greatest dread of all is that "waiting" for one sound—a knock on the door in the early morning—arrest—and the consequent probability either of being taken to prison or told to leave the country.

The great majority of Austrian refugees are in France simply "in transit," waiting for, or hoping one day to receive, visas for the United States, South America, Australia—anywhere, in fact, out of Europe. Some few have hopes of obtaining visas to the U.S.A. in July of this year, some two years hence; others look forward hopelessly to the 1940's.

It would not be doing justice, either to the Austrians in this country, or to the French themselves, to write on this subject without telling, briefly, the history of a unique organisation which is responsible for the welfare of no less than 750 Viennese refugees (shopkeepers, artisans, officials, doctors, and lawyers).

These people live in houses (rented otherwise only during the summer months) scattered throughout the low-lying but not unattractive town of Chelles, some fifteen miles from Paris, in the Seine-et-Marne, the nearest point to the Capital at which—in April, 1938, when the organisation was started—they were allowed to live.

What is known as the "Foyer de Chelles" was started by a little group of Austrians, on money realised from small properties they possessed outside Austria even before 1933. From the beginning they insisted on but one law, which has held good to this day: that the organisation should be self-supporting: that no help of any kind, be it food, money, furniture, or clothes, should be sought or accepted from the French Government or the French people. As a result of this attitude, the Austrians have incurred such respect from their neighbours that when, towards the end of last year, the order came for all refugees to clear out of the Seine-et-Marne by the 1st January, 1939, it was due to the vehement protests of the people of Chelles that their sentence was finally postponed a month—and now permission to remain until March 31st is almost certain to be granted.

Of even greater consequence than having gained such respect from their neighbours, this attitude has also incurred such admiration from some of the wealthy Jewish Clubs of Paris (the diamond merchants, etc.), that these people are now partly responsible for the fact that the organisation at Chelles has been able to keep going so long.

Six months after the Anschluss Chelles held something over 800 Austrian refugees. Since last October, no more refugees have been allowed. Nor, as was possible until January 1st, are Austrians allowed to be sent the 10 Marks (140 francs) from such friends and relations they might still have in Austria. This last has come as a shattering blow to the people of Chelles.

Their one cry, however, is that they have no work—are, indeed, strictly forbidden to work. They have no ground in which to dig, nor portion of a field on which the children might play. They dare not play even in the streets. They all remain indoors; what they do there remains a mystery to all but themselves.

THE MOUSETRAP

Brno is a town the size of Zurich and is situated 14 kilometres from the German frontier. A seven hours' walk in the night takes a family of five people across from Germany. The father leads a boy of seven by the hand and carries another three years old. The mother carries a baby. They get to the town. The police notice them. They are put into the "Green Van" and taken back. At the barbed wire fence marking the frontier, they are unloaded and taken in charge by the German guard. The father had just been released from a concentration camp. This is just one little tragedy of the mousetrap.

A few hundred emigrants live in Brno. The Jews are taken

care of by the Jewish community, all the others by the Central Committee for Refugees, which was originally founded by the League for Human Rights—now dissolved. They get Kc. 4.50 to Kc. 6 per head per day, which has to do for their rent, food and clothing.

All of them will have to leave the country within four to six weeks. The Czechs are being forced to "liquidate" the refugee problem. If they do not leave soon, they will be taken to the frontier or extradited, or else they will starve in No-man's land—with their children and babies.

The police force in Brno is humane; only now and then do they treat an emigrant like that, with the exception, of course, of those who have only just arrived from Austria. Last week there were 107 new emigrants, and even the old ones ought not to be there.

These refugees must be evacuated as quickly as possible, or they are lost. The bookshops in Brno display in their windows Swastika flags, portraits of Hitler and propaganda books of the Third Reich.

The Sudeten-German youth who remain as unofficial police in the state, threaten the refugees, march through the streets, give the Heil Hitler salute and await their new uniforms.

There are only 4 to 6 weeks left if the lives of these German refugees are to be saved. Four months have passed since the crisis and only five people are out. These got a visa for England, and these are the only visas which have been given by the Central Committee in Prague, and there seems no hope of more being granted.

This is the bigger tragedy of the mousetrap.

* * *

The organisation for emigration in Prague only touches about 3,000 people, Germans and Austrians. All these people must get out soon; and thus the battle for visas starts. During the whole of last month only 100 were granted for England, none for other countries. The refugees run about in torn clothes, begging in order to get the necessary food for their families.

Any day, at the latest the end of February or beginning of March, they must expect to be taken to the German frontier, to No-man's land or to a concentration camp.

There are 300 child emigrants under 14 years of age in Prague. In winter the mothers carry their little ones into the stations and waiting-rooms so that they can sleep. 30 per cent. of the mothers go on to the streets, so that the little ones can eat; and these are good, normal, moral middle-class women.

This will cease in a few weeks or days, who can tell? They will all be in No-man's land or in prison. And all this, so that the democrats all over the world can eat and sleep in peace.

These are the first aspects of the great tragedy, now for the others. 15,000 Germans fled before Hitler from the Sudetenland; 5,000 went back immediately. First, there was the belief that there would be a plebiscite and afterwards there was pressure from the German Government. 10,000 are still in the present Czecho-Slovakia, 4,000 of them in camps. They have lived there since the beginning of October. They are for the most part members of the Sudeten German Social Democratic party. (Their leader is Wenzel Jaksch, a man who is sure to play a part in the future development of Socialism).

In the camps, men, women and children are all forced to sleep together. Much has been written about these conditions in English newspapers. I will only mention here that men have left these camps and crossed into Germany in the hope of being better cared for in a concentration camp.

This is not the fault of the Czech Government. It is firstly the hopelessness born of months of waiting for a visa, secondly the fact that enough can never be given to protect these people from cold and hunger, and finally, it is the future without a ray of hope which makes them despair. In these camps is the best of Bohemian skilled labour. They have lost everything, work, property, home and citizenship.

The Czecho-Slovak Government have the right, according to the Option Agreement, to deport all these people by the 1st of July and the German Government have the duty to receive them. The fight against the Henleinists was hard in the Sudetenland and was bitterly waged. Who knows what may happen to these people on their return to Germany.

They have to get out of Czecho-Slovakia, not on the 1st of July, but within the next 4 to 6 weeks; for the Czechs will start extraditing before the term fixed. It is a question of the 4,000 in the camps and they, just like the Germans and Austrians, only received 100 visas from England during last month; and none from other countries.

This is the dramatic story of the mousetrap.

ORPHEUS AT TOYNBEE HALL

GLUCK'S dramatic works are rarely heard now in Cosmopolitan opera houses. First of all, they are not suitable for large opera houses and they are utterly opposed to the fashions which have prevailed during the past fifty years. It was natural that they should pass through a period of neglect with the development of the modern orchestra and the more obvious and sensational excitements of Wagnerian and post-Wagnerian opera. Further, they are not accessible to the virtuoso of the nineteenth century since they are at once the most dramatic and least theatrical of compositions for the theatre. But even more than this, they require an intense simplicity and sincerity from performers totally unaccustomed to such demands but used to being asked merely for cleverness and a certain hard glittering efficiency.

I must confess that I went, therefore, with considerable misgivings to the performance of *Orpheus* at their charming new theatre by the Toynbee Hall Theatre Club and I was richly rewarded. The performance was in almost all essentials excellent and in some respects the best I have ever heard of this opera; certainly superior to the production at Covent Garden several years ago and that at Salzburg two or three years ago. In the first place the role of Orpheus was sung by an alto (Miss Catherine Lawson) as originally intended by Gluck and there was consequently an immense gain due to the proper tone-colour. Gluck has what we might call a very small palette but no composer had a more exquisite sense of tone-colour and we know that the history of every art shows what virtue there can be in limitation. We have only to compare what wonders Gluck does with his restricted resources to the helpless impotence of most modern composers with all their wealth of means to realise how relatively unimportant the *material* resources are for an artist. M. Jean Françaix, for example, whose new Suite *Le Jugement du Fou* was given its first performance this week at the Courtauld-Sargent concert, did not seem capable of producing a single idea in this noisy and characterless work.

Every bar of Gluck on the contrary, is full of character and I was interested to perceive what a profound impression *Orpheus* made upon the Toynbee audience—and no wonder! Is there a more sublime opera in the whole realm of music unless it be the same composer's *Alceste* or *Iphigénie en Tauride*? Of course, if Orpheus is sung by a fat virtuoso tenor who feels nothing but the lack of vocal display and if the producer and conductor have so little understanding and therefore so little faith that they concentrate on elaboration of scenery and ballet then Gluck's opera becomes just a meaningless bore. But if it is produced intelligently as it was by Mr. J. L. Hodgkinson and conducted with understanding and sympathy as shown by Mr. Hans Gellhorn, then if we are lucky to find a sincere artist who looks the part, acts with intense sincerity and dignity and has a proper understanding of Gluck's musical style, then *Orpheus* is revealed for what it is, one of the supreme masterpieces of dramatic music.

Yet I must admit that few musicians to-day seem to have the courage to fly in the face of the general neglect of Gluck. For some years now I have tried to persuade Dr. Fritz Busch and Mr. John Christie that Glyndebourne is ideally suited to the performance of Gluck's operas, but I admit that last year

was the first occasion when they could possibly have added Gluck to the Glyndebourne repertory; so we may yet see *Orpheus, Armide, Alceste* or *Iphigénie en Tauride* there. *Orpheus* would perhaps be the best to begin with and as Mr. Christie is so anxious to find English singers, I can assure him that in Miss Catherine Lawson he has an Orpheus ready-made to fit the part, which in the case of this opera is almost halfway to getting it performed. If they do perform *Orpheus* at Glyndebourne I should like to warn the management against one great mistake made at Toynbee Hall. This was to have the ballet of the Blessed Spirits danced on points. Nothing could be more inappropriate in itself, for this is one of the rare occasions in the theatre when the dancing should be either in sandals or with bare feet. What is needed is the graceful and significant use of the arms and head of the dancers in the Elysian fields not toe-dancing.

Gluck is one of the strangest figures in musical history. I feel that he has not yet attained the full recognition which is his due, greatly admired as his work has been by many famous musicians. He shares with Verdi and Wagner the peculiarity of owing his fame to his operas. It is true that Verdi wrote a good string quartet and some fine choral works, but Gluck wrote symphonies, ballets and a cantata, *The Last Judgment*, which was finished by Salieri, and as far as I know, has never been published. Nevertheless both were essentially dramatic composers. Verdi is at last receiving his due now that the enthusiasm for Wagner is abating and we are able to listen to his music in a less hypnotised state. But Gluck remains to be rediscovered as Schubert is being rediscovered. It may be thought that there has been no need to rediscover Schubert, but this is not true. In the German edition of Busoni's letters to his wife Schubert is never mentioned. I know there are many other letters of Busoni unpublished and a musician who was a friend of Busoni assures me that Busoni was a genuine admirer of Schubert. The fact remains, however, that in the list of Busoni's repertory given by Professor Dent in his admirable life of Busoni we may read that Busoni only played the following works :

March (perhaps Moment Musical in F minor).
Minuet from Sonata in G major, Op. 78.
Impromptu in E flat, Op. 90, No. 2.
Impromptu, Op. 90, No. 4.
Four Impromptus, Op. 90.

It really amounts to Four Impromptus, Op. 90, a Minuet and a March. This is quite extraordinary, especially when one considers a lot of the stuff which Busoni did play. The explanation is that Schubert's great Sonatas and Klavierstücke make too high demands both on pianists and listeners and have not yet got the snob-authority to impose themselves upon the public. The same may be said of Gluck's operas. The inferior musician who judges quantitatively by the number of notes, the opulence of scoring, the obviousness of effects and the vulgarity of content is depressed by the sublime quality, the profound feeling of Gluck's music. The old saying about Gluck, "he preferred the muses to the sirens," is a sufficient explanation of the deafness of the average modern musician to his merits. But I am willing to hazard the prophecy that Gluck's works will outlive those of Wagner, Richard Strauss and Stravinsky and I am an admirer (sometimes an unwilling admirer) of all three. W. J. TURNER

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Nora," at the Duke York's

Nora (*A Doll's House*) dates—though nothing could ever make it dull. This heavily well-built play, full of fallacies, is Ibsen at his most unpalatable. *Nora* should be disturbing; these days, it fails to disturb. Its effect must at one time have been electric: now to see it is like turning out of a drawer a very old telegram, about something once momentous that is now a *fait accompli*. The human situation is not untrue: it is as true now, within the constrictions of drama, as it ever was. Many husbands still call their wives squirrels, and why should they not? In fact, after several decades of bleak mateyness between married couples, there looks like being a rather grateful swing back to the escapist idyllicness of the Helmer home. Pairs of people cannot sustain continuous life together at the very top of their form as realists. The acceptance that one must edit reality might, even, be called the new realism. No, the (apparent) main fallacy, from the point of view of to-day, is—people do *not* hinge their entire views of life on single illusions about each other. The Helmers, before the ugly entrance of Krogstadt, had found a *modus vivendi* that could only be possible for two people who were, already, fundamentally disabused. The Krogstadt affair dealt an ugly blow to their very necessary security; it would not have been enough to send them flying apart. As it is, the assumption is that Nora will return home: once a squirrel, always a squirrel. . . . All the same, this play remains a hard and fast work of craft, if not of art, and ought not to be neglected. Its inner unsatisfactoriness goes a long way to make it interesting. At the Duke of York's, the production is fidgetty, but competent and effective. As producers, Miss Lucy Mannheim and Mr. Marius Goring show almost too much intelligent verve. The commanding set, all chocolate and emerald, has a hideous cosiness that deserves respect: you can almost smell nursery when the nursery door opens, and you seem to smell the stove. Miss Lucy Mannheim's Nora is consistent—not such tepid praise as it sounds. Her acting is graceful, intelligent; she is statuesque, for a squirrel, but her mannered lightness, then stricken fumblings, show pure virtuosity. She is at her best in the scene in the first act with Mrs. Linden; the last act asks too much of the Nora Miss Mannheim has chosen to play. The two best bits of pure Ibsen acting are Mr. Harold Scott's Nils Krogstadt and Mr. John Abbott's Dr. Rank. Mr. Austin Trevor does his best with Torvald Helmer, booming away.

"Gaslight," at the Apollo

Gaslight is another Patrick Hamilton psychological thriller—not quite so taut as *Rope*. Psychological thrillers aim at getting under the skin and at leaving, in the imagination, an unpleasant residue. Apprehensions and hangovers are their stock in trade; atmospherics are of the highest importance to them. Mr. Patrick Hamilton gets his atmosphere well—by putting the play back in the last century, in what seems to have been a vintage decade for murderers, and by linking the action up with the setting—a gaslit sounding-box of a Pimlico house, of the kind that looks scabrous even outside. At the time of the play, also, marital bullying was more *de rigueur*, and rose to greater heights. Mr. Manningham (Mr. Peter Arundel) gives a display of accomplished mental cruelty; his victim Mrs. Manningham (Miss Gwen Ffrangçon-Davies) dithers along the edge of insanity. The Manninghams do a snake and rabbit act throughout. The first act, as purely macabre domestic drama, is excellent. Then Mr. Rough (Mr. Milton Rosmer) the detective comes in, with his gradual revelation, and supercharges the atmosphere. Something not only violent but exceedingly horrid occurred in this very drawing-room, in this very gaslight, twenty years ago. Mrs. Manningham learns of its implications for her. From then on, *Gaslight* is an affair of tension, and tension not always evenly sustained. There are some successfully bad moments, but the second act wavers, the third is uncertainly handled. How will Mr. Manningham take it? He is seen taking it—but there's a slight anti-climax, a big scene missing somewhere. From the point of view of the audience, this play might be rechristened "Great Expectations." But on the whole the gaslight, the disagreeable time-colour, Miss Gwen Ffrangçon-Davies and the popular interest in ladies married to murderers serve to sustain the evening pleasantly enough.

"The Importance of Being Earnest," at the Globe (Matinées)

We do not remember ever seeing an audience enjoy itself so much as it did at this production: one is left wondering whether *The Importance of Being Earnest* is not the funniest play ever written. Remoter from actuality than anything of Congreve's, it is nonsense immortalised by style. Nothing else by Wilde is comparable with it in merit—somehow, this once only, he made a self-sufficient and almost flawless work of art. It requires very delicate treatment, and Mr. Gielgud has not had the time to make all the cast act in the same key. His own performance is perfection: he maintains a vexed solemnity of demeanour, never revealing the fact that he finds his lines fat and funny; his

phrasing is exemplary, his timing exact. Miss Edith Evans gets the loudest laughs; she even allows the audience to interrupt with guffaws some of her most shapely periods. Moreover, she coarsens Lady Bracknell into a loud-voiced termagant, and we prefer the fatigued acidity which Miss Mabel Terry-Lewis brought to the part. At the same time Miss Evans's performance is a wonderfully full-blooded affair, and there is probably no other actress who could put such depths of comic expression into the word "handbag." Miss Margaret Rutherford plays Prism with the *bravura* she nightly displays in *Spring Meeting*, and in the last act breaks out of the frame by too convincing a display of real emotion. Miss Angela Baddeley, like Mr. Gielgud, is perfectly in tune throughout—Cecily could not be more beautifully played. Mr. David Horne was equally good in the too small part of the Canon. Mr. Ronald Ward played Algernon skilfully but much too naturalistically. The Gwendolen is felicitous neither in conception nor in execution. Surely she should be yearning and "aesthetic" on the surface, and only gradually reveal her toughness. Motley's decor for the garden-scene is charming, but the two interiors are too obtrusively realistic for so stylised a play: their careful ugliness is out of keeping with the elegance of the language. The costumes are highly successful. One more small point: the bell, rung by Lady Bracknell in so Wagnerian a style, should, we suggest, be not electric but the old-fashioned bell which has an *accelerando* and *rallentando*. It is greatly to be hoped that Mr. Gielgud will contrive to produce this heavenly play for a run, and it is in this hope that we have ventured to make some criticisms. Meanwhile, you are strongly recommended to go to one of this series of matinées—every Monday and Tuesday up to, and including, February 21st. The production is for the benefit of theatrical charities, and provides the most enjoyable entertainment in London.

Kapp at Wildenstein's
John Hutton and Richard Seewald, at the Stafford Gallery

Kapp, whose drawings and caricatures have often delighted readers of this journal, is holding his first exhibition of paintings—at the age, he tells us, of 48. All but four of these thirty-six pictures have been painted in the last two years. They are remarkably skilful: the artist has obviously looked intelligently at a great many good modern pictures, and he is up to every known dodge. Indeed there is something disquieting about the fluency and artfulness with which he applies paint, for the handling too often suggests cleverness rather than any very profound feeling. The artist says in his foreword that "he is content to be regarded as a beginner," but if there is a failing in his work, it is not amateurishness but a professional slickness. The most successful paintings are the smaller and quieter ones: a portrait of a deaf mute shows Kapp's well-known skill in suggesting character. One would hardly guess that all these works came from the same hand, but it is a virtue in Kapp that, unlike many budding painters, he does not seek to parade his own personality. The exhibition includes a large number of the drawings and lithographs with which Kapp has made his reputation.

The mural decorations shown by Mr. John Hutton at the Stafford Gallery deserve mention because they show a young artist wasting his considerable gifts. Two street-scenes, in a fairly naturalistic style, are excellent in colour and packed with promise; but the more abstract designs are empty of any but fashionable interest. Unfortunately it is work of this type which attracts would-be "modern" architects, and Mr. Hutton may be so modest that he prefers their wishes to his own sensibility. Herr Seewald, in some of his pictures, has been unluckily influenced by the Donanier Rousseau, a great but literally inimitable artist. The pen and pencil drawings are much more felicitous than the paintings.

London Scientific Film Society at the Academy

Sunday afternoon in the London winter is a perfect time for going to the Movies, and accordingly all cinemas at this hour are closed. Londoners therefore should welcome the London Scientific Film Society, which gives its members programmes at 2.30 at the Academy. (Apply to the Secretary, 28 Hogarth Road, N.W.5, Frobisher 3258.) Last Sunday's entertainment—for the programme was at least as entertaining as it was educational—included an excellent film about a Lincolnshire village, where the mediaeval strip-system is still in use; a fascinating account of the saving of forests from the wood-wasp by the use of an insect that preys upon this pest; a rather too elementary film about acoustics, and a remarkably well-planned documentary about vitamins, which rammed home the fact that half the population of this country is under-nourished through poverty. A coloured film made by the United States Steel Company was made up of remarkable photographs, but the commentary was in the worst style, hysterical, exhausting, and inexcusably uninformative. Some photographs of air-currents in motion—an extraordinary feat—required fuller explanation.

"The Ware Case," at the Odeon

In a dreary week which included the flattest and silliest of the Gracie Field's films at the Regal, a threadbare gangster-lawyer imbroglio at the London Pavilion and the witless antics of the Ritz Brothers at the New Gallery, *The Ware Case* may seem rather better than it is. Certainly Robert Stevenson has made excellent and remarkably plausible entertainment out of the well-known play in which Gerald du Maurier starred. It is a melodrama, but on the screen it proceeds with an air of quiet reasonableness which is only destroyed by the ending; no skill on earth could make us believe in that final speech to the crowd by Sir Hubert Ware. Until this point understatement and authentic settings make the development of the plot credible and even absorbing; and Clive Brook is ideally cast as the fascinating scoundrel Sir Hubert, giving a performance of brilliant lightness and variety. There are several other good performances, and none wholly bad: Edward Rigby has some moments of rich comedy as a tramp, Jane Baxter's Lady Ware is far above the general level of English screen heroines, and Peter Ball lends a curious reality to her repulsive brother. Best of all is the Attorney-General of Francis Sullivan, which adds one more to a by now distinguished gallery of character studies. As Lady Ware's lover, Barry K. Barnes is sound, but a little too stolid; he might profitably loosen his upper lip a little. The photography is good, and the use of the camera in the court scene ingenious and dramatic. Altogether *The Ware Case*, taken with last year's successes, gives us ground to hope that the English cinema may be in for a period of seven fat years.

THE COMING WEEK

SUNDAY, February 12th—
- Prof. G. W. Keeton: "The Refugee Problem," Conway Hall, 11.
- Aylmer Rose: "Can Our Civilisation Survive?" 153 Finchley Road, 6.15.
- "Shooting Stars," production by Sunday at Eight Club in aid of National Joint Committee for Spanish Relief, Phoenix Theatre.
- "On the Frontier," Group Theatre Production, Globe, 8.30.

MONDAY, February 13th—
- M. Cornforth: "A Policy for British Agriculture," 2 Keats Grove, 8.
- Debate: "That We Should Talk to the Dictators," R. Sorenson *v.* Prof. J. D. Bernal; Chairman: Dr. C. E. M. Joad, Birkbeck College, 8.15.
- Performance by Javanese Dancers in aid of International Peace Hospital in China, Phoenix, 8.15. And on February 14th.
- "Girdle Round the Earth," Torch.

TUESDAY, February 14th—
- Julius Lewin: "Steps Towards Self-Government in Africa," Friends House, 1.20.
- Sir Frederick Whyte: "The United States," Morley College, 8.
- Berthold Viertel: "The Practice of the Drama," 66 Portland Place, 8.30.

WEDNESDAY, February 15th—
- Public Meeting in support of "Access to Mountains and Moorlands" Bill, Friends House, 7.30.
- Dr. E. Glover: "Psychology and Social Crises," Conway Hall, 8.
- Public Meeting on the Spanish Question; speakers: H. N. Brailsford and G. R. Strauss, Millicent Fawcett Hall, Tufton Street, 8.
- B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra Concert, Queens Hall, 8.15.
- Concert in aid of the League for the Boycott of Aggressor Nations, Suffolk Galleries, 8.30.
- Concert organised by Kensington Spanish Foodship Committee, 14 Holland Park, 8.30.

THURSDAY, February 16th—
- D. V. Glass: "Population Policies," L.S.E., 5.
- Serge Chermayeff: "Modern Furniture and Its Application to the Modern Interior," Central School of Arts and Crafts, 7.
- Galton Dinner and Lecture, Prof. C. G. Darwin: "Positive Eugenic Policy," Waldorf Hotel, 7.45.

FRIDAY, February 17th—
- Major-Gen. H. L. Pritchard: "Air Raid Precautions Organisation and Its Relation to Imperial Defence," Senate House, 5.30.
- Prof. J. B. S. Haldane: "Race in Fact and Theory," Institute of Education, 5.30.

Correspondence

SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS

SIR,—In your issue of February 4th, Mr. Ivor Thomas puts forward a very common argument against Sir Stafford Cripps' Memorandum. It is this. The Labour Party cannot be converted to the idea of cooperation, and therefore the only effect of any vigorous agitation for these proposals will be to split the party.

I believe that this reasoning is based on a false assumption. Are the defenders of isolation so invincible? It is true that they have the enormous advantage of control of the party machine, but they will only remain invincible as long as the big majority of the rank and file, who desire cooperation, are unable to express their views in any effective way. The three to four million members of our movement, industrial and political, who take no active part in its day-to-day work, and who in their outlook are not far removed from the non-party citizen, feel very keenly the dangers of the international situation and desire a change of Government as quickly as possible. It is from these people, as well as the consciously socialist elements in the movement, that Sir Stafford's views draw their strongest support. This support has increased in proportion as the international situation has deteriorated since the Bournemouth Conference.

If those who, like Mr. Ivor Thomas, believe that it is madness for Labour and Liberal to fight each other for the advantage of the Tory candidates, take up a defeatist attitude and advise us to take no part in this controversy, then of course the views of the rank and file will remain inarticulate and we will have to resign ourselves to the gloomy prospect of another five years of the Chamberlain Government. But if they are prepared to declare their beliefs and strive to mobilise this opinion, there is no reason why the Whitsun Conference should not register their views. It should be remembered that at the Bournemouth Conference the weight of rank and file opinion was so strongly in favour of the increased constituency representation on the Executive that this important constitutional change was carried in spite of the opposition of the principal Union leaders.

The argument that to initiate discussion in the party on a vital tactical proposal, which may be defeated, means splitting the party is a denial of democracy in our movement. Such discussion is more likely to have an invigorating effect. What may split the party is the action of the Executive in abusing their powers by expelling those who disagree with them.

Mr. Thomas himself deprecates Labour and Liberal fighting each other to the advantage of the Tory. Surely arrangements for withdrawing Labour candidates in favour of Liberals are only tolerable where the Liberals are pledged to a specific domestic and foreign policy. In order to make his proposals specific, Sir Stafford Cripps has included in both the Memorandum and the Petition which he launched at Newcastle a programme with which I am sure Mr. Thomas would not disagree, and which is, in all essentials, Labour's Immediate Programme. Sir Stafford's appeal is, in effect, to the Labour Party to attempt to arrive at some working arrangement with the Liberal Party on the basis of this programme.

Therefore the compromise advocated by Mr. Thomas is in fact no compromise at all. It has already been rejected by the National Executive. Since Mr. Thomas wrote his letter, it has been revealed in *Reynolds* that Sir Stafford did offer to refrain from a campaign if the Executive would agree to allow electoral arrangements in the 200 odd constituencies where Labour has no chance at all. His offer was rejected.

Sir Stafford Cripps' proposals have brought a gleam of hope to a movement that has been driven to despair by years of impotence. That despair has been deepened by the expulsion of the foremost Socialist in the party. This is not a time for Socialists to hang back, but to strive with all their might to see that this last hope for preserving peace and freedom is not extinguished. The spirit of Socialism will not survive another defeat.

G. R. STRAUSS

SIR,—Here is something that illustrates concretely the imbecility of the Labour Party. And I have been, and still am, a Socialist for 50 years. In Scarborough we have, as usual, three candidates for Parliament—Tory, Liberal and Labour. The Labour vote is almost negligible here. It has never risen above 4,645, except in 1931, when there was no Liberal candidate and when it secured 6,575 votes. At the 1935 election it was 3,195. On that occasion the Tory vote was 23,210 and the Liberal vote 16,668. We now have a splendidly progressive Liberal candidate in the person of Mrs. Corbett-Ashby, against whom we have a very mediocre, but wealthy, Tory candidate and a young and inexperienced Labour candidate.

The Labour Party here know that they have not got a ghost of a chance of winning, that the utmost that they can do is to take away sufficient Liberal votes to ensure the Tory candidate being returned to power and so perpetuating the reign of Chamberlain and all the disaster that that implies. Yet the Labour party wants us to take them seriously in their national drive, along with the Co-operative Party, to rid the land of Chamberlain and his Government!

The pity of it! Between such Progressives as Mrs. Corbett-Ashby and similar people in the Labour Party, what a splendid united programme, both foreign and domestic, might there not be formed! But no. Mr. Greenwood has said, and the Labour Executive has endorsed it by expelling Sir Stafford Cripps, that it is useless to think of co-operating with anyone to save the country and empire and peace of the world, unless they can pronounce correctly the magic words "Socialism" and "Nationalisation." Therefore we must be left to perish! Better so, says the Labour Party, than that we should be saved by those who are not "pure Socialists."

WALTER B. GRAHAM

42, Londesborough Road,
Scarborough.

LABOUR AND LIBERALS

SIR,—I think that anyone who studies the facts and figures of the three General Elections of 1906, January, 1910, and December, 1910, will conclude that we owe the Parliament Act to the adoption by the Liberal and Labour parties at those elections of the tactics recommended now by Mr. Ivor Thomas.

J. L. HAMMOND

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BOMBING

SIR,—The Penguin Specials are justly popular, generally dispensing sound sense to a wide public. It was disturbing to read in "The Air Defence of Britain" therefore, that we are urged, on the outbreak of hostilities with Germany, to carry out a wholesale bombing campaign on Berlin and other big German cities. Our press, ranging from gentlemanly deprecation to totalitarian "intolerables" is almost unanimous in pouring out condemnation on Franco's (or his friend's) inhumanity in bombing civilian populations. If our own intention is to do the same at the first opportunity, this is so much hypocrisy.

This same Special admits that, with the doubtful exception of the quick war, a victory is more likely to be achieved as a result of internal dissension of the enemy civilian population than by sheer force of arms. It seems, therefore, utter folly deliberately to antagonise this civilian population by the most certain means at our disposal . . . bombing them. Before the rise to power of National Socialism, the parties of the Left represented the bulk of the population and they were strongest in Berlin. It is unreasonable to suppose that these people have undergone a great political conversion. . . . Nazi propaganda to the contrary notwithstanding. Let us, therefore, confine our bombardment of these potential allies to wireless propaganda and reserve our high explosives for purely strategic targets. There is no lack of these; Hamburg and Bremerhaven docks, Köln Hauptbahnhof and the Rhine bridges are obvious examples and easy to spot. They are also far more accessible than the civilians of Berlin. Let us make it known that we have no quarrel with the German people, and that, should they assist us in the overthrow of the regime, they will be regarded as allies and treated accordingly in subsequent settlement. I. W. G. CAMERON

Nigeria.

DEMOCRATIC INITIATIVE

SIR,—Your leading article on the international situation—apprehending another "Munich"—says: "The solution is for us to take the initiative, begin to put our own imperial house in order, and know beforehand where and on what principles of right we are prepared to stand." That the democracies should release themselves from the paralysis of action which the aggressiveness of the dictatorship seems to have inflicted upon them and should take the lead in trying to create a new economic deal in the world, open to all nations and non-menacing in character, is the central demand of the National Petition "for a new Peace Conference" which was promoted in the aftermath of the Munich "Settlement" and has since obtained very considerable influential and popular support.

It is manifest that the occasion for such an initiative is becoming riper. Hitler's last speech showed how precariously poised is the position of the dictatorship at the present time. MM. Daladier and Bonnet have added to Roosevelt's offer for the United States their assurances in regard to France's willingness to take part in a new international Conference. The question remains, what are Great Britain and Mr. Chamberlain to say? Are we to wait until the colonial ultimatum comes and then either to "scuttle and surrender" or fight the supreme and supremely inglorious imperialist war? Or are we going to act *before* the ultimatum comes, avoiding the dilemma of (in your own memorable words) "making ready for war and more war or helplessly watching the growth of a universal Fascist tyranny in which there will be no war because there will be nothing left to fight for?"

The Petition will at least enable British opinion to indicate what it requires Mr. Chamberlain to do in this situation. I hope, therefore, that readers of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION will do their utmost to swell the strength of the Petition before the campaign closes on March 4th. A million or more voices behind the plea for democratic leadership in solving the world's problems constructively may be a factor of immense importance in the months ahead. Forms and particulars of the Petition can be obtained from the National Peace Council at 39 Victoria Street, S.W.1. GERALD BAILEY

OUR TERRITORIALS

SIR,—A business colleague of mine inquired from the Warwickshire Territorial Army as to the possibility of his obtaining a commission, and received a typed circular letter, the first paragraph of which read as follows:

(1) All units of the Territorial Army in the County have now completed their establishment of officers and also have long waiting lists. Unless, therefore, an applicant has personal friends in any particular unit in which he wishes to serve, there is very little chance of his application being favourably considered.

I should add that I have in my possession the original letter, which could be forwarded for your perusal on request.

12 Manor Road, Coventry, Warwicks. JOHN MYERS

THE CHINESE REVOLUTION

SIR,—Miss Freda Utley, in her letter in your last issue, repeats the complaint that a fellow-countryman in China once addressed to André Malraux: "*Mais où sont les* Rouges *d'antan?*" Both Miss Utley and Mr. Hudson, in fact, seem to be agreed that there are no longer any "Bolsheviks" (i.e. genuine Communists) in China to-day; they have all become "Mensheviks" (reformists, pseudo-communists)—which is a good enough thing in its way, but a sad descent from the heaven-storming days of 1927.

Mao Tse-tung will not mind so very much, perhaps, if Miss Utley is unwilling to call him a Bolshevik. But the charge that the Chinese Communists "have ceased to be a revolutionary party" is dangerously misleading. May I add a word on this, which I believe expresses the views of responsible Chinese Communist leaders?

The majority of the Chinese Communists, following Stalin, have always rejected the Trotskyite thesis of proletarian revolution in a semi-colonial country, such as China was by definition in 1927, and remains even at the present time. They held the theory of the "three stages" of the Chinese Revolution—the "anti-imperialist stage," the "bourgeois-democratic stage," finally the social revolution. If this makes them (and Stalin) "Mensheviks," then that is a matter for Miss Utley to fight out with those who attach more importance to these labels than I do. But it does seem to me important that their present position should not be misrepresented.

When Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang took up arms in 1937 against the Japanese invaders, they were renewing the struggle for national independence (the "anti-imperialist revolution") where it had been left off ten years before. With the logic of their own revolutionary theory, the Communists immediately pledged their support, and the support of their armies, to the man who had been their bitterest enemy for a decade. This pledge of loyalty was not given unconditionally, and the Communist Party retained its political independence and the control of its own forces. But it was agreed to sink outstanding political differences in the face of a common danger. (Incidentally, the terms of Kuomintang-Communist reunion say nothing about the latter "no longer advocating the class-war," which is meaningless. What the Communists agreed to do was to "cease their insurrectionary policy towards the Kuomintang.")

If China can succeed in her present life-and-death struggle with Japan, then the "anti-imperialist revolution" will also have succeeded, for a China strong enough to drive out the Japanese will certainly be able to deal with any other foreign powers on a new basis of equality. And as the condition of Chinese success is the strengthening and enlargement of the present United Front, with the organisation of a mass movement through which the people must gain increasing representation in the government, the "bourgeois-democratic" revolution is likely to be achieved in China in the actual course of the war—is, in fact, in process of achievement now.

If this "Free, Democratic Chinese Republic" of the Communist slogans does in time emerge, it can only have been built with the full co-operation of the Chinese working-class; and the Communist Party will presumably then find itself the peasant-and-worker party within this democratic State, facing new tasks in a new environment, and free to work for the ultimate goal of proletarian revolution. That is a perspective of the future; it does not enter into the picture at the present time, because the proletarian revolution is simply not feasible in China to-day. Nor was it feasible (*pace* Mr. Isaacs) in 1927, when China was still a semi-colonial country.

This is the view of many Chinese Communists with whom I have talked, and it seems to me a genuinely realistic view. Only romantic Leftists could play with visions of a "Communist China" at a time when the Chinese people are fighting for their very existence against foreign aggression. Few friends of China will deny that the lead given by the Communists for a "National United Front" against Japanese aggression was a correct and far-

sighted one; any alternative—such as that advocated by Trotskyites and "ultra-revolutionary elements" in China—could only have meant disunity, and probably disaster.

From personal observation, I can testify that the Chinese "Red Army" has lost none of its spirit or fighting quality within the United Front, under the banner of the Kuomintang. If it has ceased to be revolutionary, then the hammer-and-sickle flag now furled in Yenan should properly be hoisted over Transport House.

JAMES BERTRAM

THE BRITISH PRESS

SIR,—In a letter on the British press in your issue of January 28th, Mr. Herbert Agar referred to a Fascist meeting in Hammersmith during the September crisis which turned into an anti-war rally which thousands of non-Fascists turned out to join.

I should like to correct the wrong impression given to Mr. Agar as to what actually took place.

On September 25th Sir Oswald Mosley intended to hold a great anniversary rally and march from the Embankment to Lime Grove, Hammersmith. As the result of protests the march was banned and Mosley proclaimed his intention of holding a rally in Lime Grove at 7 p.m. that evening. The Hammersmith Labour Movement decided to keep him out of Lime Grove and started a meeting the night before, held the pitch all night (in spite of attacks by the Fascists) and during the whole of the Sunday speaker followed speaker until the crowd had grown to such a size that we had to use the roof of a very powerful loud-speaker van in order to continue the meeting.

Meanwhile the Fascists put up their platform in Stanlake Road across the other side of Uxbridge Road and started to hold a meeting at about 5 p.m. When Mosley arrived at 7.30 p.m. they had a fair-sized meeting, made up as usual in the main of Mosley's organised followers. At 8.15 the whole lot marched off and their number may be guessed by the fact that it took only 10 to 15 minutes for them to go by.

It should be borne in mind that this rally was supposed to be a gathering of Mosley's entire forces in London and the Southern Counties, and as such was a very poor effort, and a bad advertisement for Mosley if given any prominence in the press.

We continued our meeting until 9.30 p.m. Of the two meetings in Hammersmith that organised by the Labour Movement was by far the larger and more significant. The "thousands" mentioned by Mr. Agar were in Lime Grove supporting the demand that our Government stand by the Czechs.

But on that same evening there was an event of far greater significance than the Hammersmith meetings. From early evening until midnight Whitehall and Trafalgar Square were filled with people demonstrating their desire for action in support of Czecho-Slovakia and against Hitler. With the exception of the *News Chronicle* and the *Daily Worker*, this fact was simply ignored by all the leading newspapers, so I think Mr. Agar will not find the press so inconsistent after all.

I only write this letter to correct what is clearly a wrong impression. All the facts mentioned here can be very easily verified if Mr. Agar is interested.

A. SKILBECK,
Hammersmith Labour Party and Trades Council. Hon. Sec.

PRINCIPLE OF COMPENSATION

SIR,—I notice with alarm that in the House the other day Sir John Simon stated that with regard to compensation for loss or injury to persons or property arising from enemy action in war-time, the principle that the Government would apply was that the loss must be regarded as falling on the community as a whole, and some scheme for compensation devised. There can be no reasonable objection to compensation for loss of life or personal injury, but it seems unjust that the workers who will be asked to defend a country of which they own no part will also be asked to help pay for property of which they own none. If, as is advocated in some quarters, National Revenue were raised entirely by a direct tax on income with, of course, allowances exempting the lower paid members of the community, the method would be as equitable as any, for, of course, it would be impracticable to spread the cost over the property-owning class themselves.

Already the workers are paying too great a part of our National Expenditure by way of the indirect taxes on such as beer, tobacco, and entertainments and the more insidious indirect taxes on household necessities such as tea, sugar, etc. The effect, in case of large scale damage to property in war-time, will however, on the basis proposed by the Government, mean the further lowering of the standard of living of the workers, whilst keeping intact the property of the rich.

P. S. CROWTHER
Leeds.

W. B. YEATS

SIR,—Apart from the rather curious way of saying it—"plunge their country into the horrors of rebellion and civil war" (which ought to read "lead their country to political freedom") I think most Irish people will be very glad that David Garnett insists on the political influence of Yeats on his generations. Whatever differences of opinion Irishmen may have had with him in later years, all but the most extreme, or puritanical, or uncultivated, have been ready to pay warm tribute to the force of his nationalist inspiration. He was, with Æ., the only Irish writer who lived out his life in Ireland. Like Shaw, who has lived outside Ireland, he always spoke out on the side of Ireland in her fight for her own freedom. Much of his early poetry was the literary expression of his racial sense.

One may regret the passing comparison with D'Annunzio—though it is put tentatively and with a proper qualification as regards the difference in spirit between the two men. In a book reviewed in the same edition as that which contains Mr. Garnett's fine appreciation of Yeats (*School for Dictators*, by Ignazio Silone) there is, on pages 174–5, a shrewd assessment of the "political" D'Annunzio—or rather, the rhetorical D'Annunzio as Silone calls him—a man with a love for unbridled violence and theatrical display. Yeats was much too realistic to be theatrical in that way; had he been he would hardly have exercised the same influence over his compatriots. I have heard him declare that Irishmen in Ireland have no real interest in the craft of politics; what they talk about is personalities and generalisations. It may be so, but they admire men who are politically gifted and hard-headed—O'Connell, Parnell, De Valera. The more drama there is about such men, the better; but *theatricality*—that is different. D'Annunzio was something of a Playboy. Yeats was a hard-headed man for all the elaborate caparison of his (defensive) pose. Dramatic men he loved. Playboys either bored or amused him.

SEAN O'FAOLAIN

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Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

"I LOOK forward to the last instalment of the Wordsworth Correspondence with dread as well as with eagerness." With these words I ended my review in 1937 of the two volumes covering *The Middle Years*. Reading *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth* (1821–1850), *The Later Years*, edited by Ernest de Selincourt (Oxford, 3 vols., 63*s*.), has been as disturbing as meeting an old friend after a long lapse of time, a friend to whom one has looked up, and who has had a great influence upon one's life. The changes of the body do not matter: affection laughs at physical decay and even at the changes of temper which accompany it, so long as they are in character. But the mind changes, and when it is not merely the outside of the head which has gone bald, what is to be done? These three volumes contain 1,044 letters as against the 241 in the volume of *Early Letters*, and 411 in the two volumes of *The Middle Years*. "Over half are now published for the first time, while of the remainder more than a quarter have only appeared in truncated versions, often incorrectly dated." To read them in consecutive days, as I have done, is to live at very close quarters with Wordsworth and things are overheard which shock the visitor. I will deal with some of the more painful passages first:

> I hear Mr. Marshall is a member of the London College Committee, and active in all the *improvements* now going forward. I cannot be doubted that a main motive with the leaders of this and similar institutions is to acquire influence for political purposes. Mr. Brougham mentions, as a strong inducement for founding the proposed college, that it will render medical education so much cheaper. It is clearly cheap enough. We have far more doctors than can find patients to live by; and I cannot see how society is to be benefited by swarms of medical practitioners starting up from lower classes in the community than they are now furnished by. The better able the parents are to incur expense, the stronger pledge have we of their children being above meanness and unfeeling and sordid habits. As to teaching Belles Lettres, Languages, Law, Political Economy, Morals, etc., by lectures, it is absurd.

Professor de Selincourt writes in his introduction that it is still the fashion to misrepresent Wordsworth's character and opinions in his later years. But one cannot disguise the extraordinary change which came after the final breach with Coleridge.

The passage quoted above was written when Wordsworth was only fifty-five—twenty years or so after writing:

> And when we chanced
> One day to meet a hunger-bitten girl,
> Who crept along, fitting her languid gait
> Unto a Heifer's motion, by a cord
> Tied to her arm, and picking thus from the lane
> Its sustenance, while the girl with her two hands
> Was busy knitting, in a heartless mood
> Of solitude, and at the sight my Friend
> In agitation said, "'Tis against *that*
> Which we are fighting," I with him believed
> Devoutly that a spirit was abroad
> Which could not be withstood, that poverty
> At least like this, would in a little time
> Be found no more.

Mr. Marshall, so shockingly active in the foundation of London University, was a neighbour and very close friend of Wordsworth's. If he and his son (who were the poet's travelling companions on a tour to Ireland in 1829) had occupied themselves in working children to death in their Leeds factory, Wordsworth would not have worried. But when in the younger Mr. Marshall's words: "the very race of Englishmen is dwindling down and degenerating under the effects of unremitting labour, the insufficient and unwholesome food that their country's laws allow them to enjoy," the idea of providing more doctors greatly disturbed Wordsworth. Within a few years of his letter, England was swept by outbreaks of Asiatic cholera, and his sister, Dorothy, nearly died of it in Halifax. All the Wordsworths were constantly ailing.

In 1821 Wordsworth gave a perfectly reasonable defence of the change of his political principles:

> *I* abandoned France and her Rulers, when *they* abandoned the struggle for Liberty, gave themselves up to Tyranny, and endeavoured to enslave the world.

But he did not realise that he had abandoned the struggle for Liberty also when he lamented the absence of a powerful aristocracy in France to prop up the monarchy. He believed that accumulations of property in the possession of a small class were the only defence against priestcraft and superstition. The idea that education might be a more powerful bulwark did not occur to him. Indeed, he disliked it, particularly in women.

> What is the use of pushing on the education of girls so fast. . . . What are you to do with these girls? What demand is there for the ability that they have prematurely acquired?

He did not scruple to refuse an offer for his daughter's hand when she was 22, without acquainting her that it had been made, and begged the suitor, who was a relative, but whose identity is not perfectly certain, not to let her know anything of the matter. The request appears to have been granted, and Wordsworth retained his daughter unmarried as his amanuensis for another fifteen years. Professor de Selincourt says in a note that it was Quillinan's financial straits and the prospect of the trial hanging over him which were Wordsworth's chief reasons for opposing Dora's marriage. He maintained his opposition for the three years of the engagement. Three years after the marriage he refused her an allowance, so

> that she may be somewhat straitened, acting as she has chosen to do with my strongest disapprobation I deem right and fit.

Three years later she had died of tuberculosis.

* * *

The contraction of Wordsworth's sympathies with age, and his sterility as a poet, are extremely well-known facts. But the new letters show that the process of desiccation was not so complete as has been thought. When he was writing to the Bishop of London about the Bill for Relief of Roman Catholic disabilities he described the Irish as "swarms of degraded people, vicious in character and unnatural in immediate origin." When he was actually in Ireland, the scenery reminded him of Wharfedale, and he was much affected by a woman carrying a sick child in her arms:

> What would one not give to see among Protestants such devout reliance upon the mercy of their Creator, so much resignation, so much piety, so much simplicity and singleness of mind. . . .

It must be remembered in reading letters that an inability to communicate does not mean that there is nothing to communicate. Wordsworth appears in a different light after he begins writing to Miss Isabella Fenwick, with whom he was more intimate than anyone after his sister Dorothy's mind had given way:

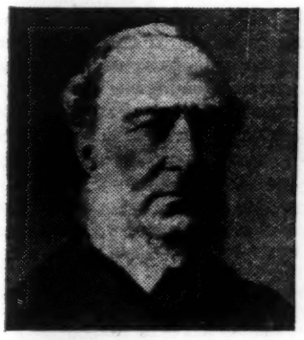
> Here comes Lady Cadogan, as she calls herself, my dear ruin of a sister. She is for her wonderfully well, except for her malady of "bizzing" which is much encreased upon her. I hope she will drop it ere long.

Professor de Selincourt might have helped us here with a note. It sounds grim. To Miss Fenwick, for whom he was anxious to build a house in Dora's field, so as to have her always near him, he was able to express all his feelings. Reading had never been very important to Wordsworth: his pleasure from it declined, but luckily his delight in Nature remained. After a most charming description of the early autumn, the winding river, the cornfields and the mountains seeming to touch the unbroken domes of wood from which they rise, he adds:

> Nevertheless, (and were the attractions here ten times as great it would be the same) I cannot help wishing half the day through that I were back amongst you.

In a complete collection of letters such as this the reader, I think, is more than compensated for being occasionally bored by the pleasure which is to be got from knowing everything. For example, both William and Dorothy made Samuel Rogers arrange all their contracts with publishers. Dorothy wrote:

> I find it next to impossible to make up my mind to sacrifice my privacy for a certainty less than two hundred pounds.



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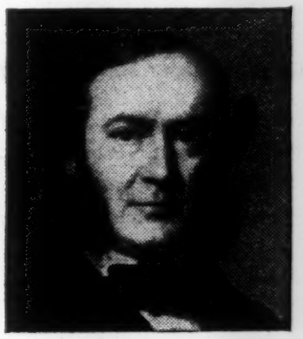

JOHN THADEUS DELANE

WHEN in 1935 *The Times* attained its one hundred and fiftieth birthday, the event was marked by the publication of *The Thunderer in the Making*, the first of three volumes of the *History of the Times*. The second volume, covering the years from 1841 to 1884, will be published next Monday. It tells the full story of the efforts of JOHN WALTER III and JOHN THADEUS DELANE to preserve the independent character of English journalism and to win the right for the politically conscious public to have an instructed opinion on affairs at home and abroad.

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Rogers must have smiled at the phrase, but whether his amusement showed itself in his reply we cannot tell—nor do we know how Elizabeth Clarkson replied when Dorothy told her not to hesitate to invite her for three months if she felt a wish to do so.

DAVID GARNETT

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Penny World. By HUMPHREY CHESTERMAN. *Harrap.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Flute and Drums. By HILDE SPIEL. *Hutchinson.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

To suggest a frank and amiable nature Charlie and Bill are ideal names; and when Mr. Maugham goes one better and calls his new hero Charley the unusual spelling has the effect of making the boy just that much fresher, curlier and more decent than any mere Charlie could be. Charley Mason comes from a cultured and comfortable family, and the novel describes his discovery of the cruder side of life during a Christmas holiday in Paris. The principal object of his trip was to see his queer, brilliant friend Simon, but from Simon he receives a cool welcome; the reason being that Simon is now a Communist, engaged in the elimination of all human feelings from his life in order to fit himself for the role of a Dzerjinsky in the coming revolution, and Charley is the one person he cannot help loving. He takes Charley to a brothel and introduces him, for amusement's sake, to the Russian wife of a murderer undergoing a long term of imprisonment; Lydia and Simon are the instruments chosen by Mr. Maugham to arouse Charley from his world of cosy culture to awareness of "life as it is lived." Charley does not go to bed with Lydia, but out of pity and curiosity he takes her to stay with him at his hotel; and from her rambling confessions and Simon's articles and newspaper cuttings he pieces together the story of the murder. In the elaboration of this story Mr. Maugham displays his inventive and narrative powers at their best: we accept Lydia, even swallowing her preposterous reason for embracing prostitution, we form a vivid picture of her fascinating husband, and, best of all, we recognise the precise truth of the delineation of her mother-in-law, the harsh, upright, practical and scheming Mme. Berger. But the shape in which Lydia's tragedy is unfolded to the reader imposes too great a strain on even Mr. Maugham's powers; the actual account of the crime and of its detection is brilliantly done, but if it is to be told in such detail and at such length it would surely have been better that we should not be forewarned of its conclusion. Eventually Mr. Maugham tires of indirect narration through the mouths of Lydia and Simon and proceeds to tell her story on his own account; a course which necessarily involves the suspension of our interest in the relationship between Lydia and Charley.

The purpose of the book is to contrast the sheltered English life of the Masons with the greater "reality" of the Parisian underworld. The author is successful in the sense that he always holds our attention, but his treatment of the Mason family strikes me as weak and exaggerated; instead of making them representative of a real but limited culture, he has used them as a target for easy and indiscriminate satire. The Masons are connoisseurs of the arts, owning pictures by Utrillo, Vuillard and Grant: at the same time they have an electric fire made to look like burning logs. An enlightened gentleman of the type of Leslie Mason does not now hold that "in a great city you had to have slums, in point of fact the lower classes preferred them to model dwelling-houses." And the scene in which the Masons do the Louvre *en famille* is pure farce: owners of Grants and Chiricos do not turn up their noses at Rembrandt and Titian, and certainly they do not stand in the Salon Carré spouting Pater in front of the Mona Lisa:

> "I don't mind admitting that I'm a bit of a Philistine when it comes to old masters," said Leslie, "but that's got a je ne sais quoi that gets you, there's no denying that. Can you remember that bit of Pater's, Venetia? He hit the nail on the head and no mistake."

No, I don't recognise the Masons, and I don't care for the implied sneer at the way of life they are intended to typify—which consists of doing your best in your inherited job and cultivating what used to be called the things of the mind in your spare time. As an entertainment (apart from some curious lapses of style) *Christmas Holiday* can be recommended; but its implicit moral is suspect.

Happy Valley is a broad and ambitious panorama of small-town Australian life. Mr. White has put a high voltage of energy and thought into his book, and he is obviously a gifted writer: he has an understanding of relationships and an ability to present a whole group of characters in the round which are remarkable in a young novelist. If only he had never encountered the fatal literary influences of the twenties, what a good book he might have written! Hemingway goes fairly well with the Australian scene; for a time it looked as though the book would be one more demonstration of the importance of being Ernest, and that I could take. But soon Mr. White was essaying to bend the bow of Ulysses, in this manner:

> Bursting out of his clothes, and that woman, dirt-common, in silk jumpers swaying about, a wonder she had the nerve, if it wasn't to put a stamp on a letter, and Ernest was clever, he had a mind if you drew it out, not like Joe Belper, coming and talking for hours on end till you didn't know if your head, without a cachet in the house, she fancied herself of course because that cousin at Government House, well, if you liked to, and Joe if you like, but she didn't, not in a public-house, and then come to the back door with her, oh, Mrs. Moriarty, I'm collecting things for the church bazaar, as if you was a working woman where front doors don't exist.

Happy Valley is that sad thing, a good book spoiled by excessive zeal and misdirected ambition. Obviously Mr. White knows and understands the isolated antipodean community of which he writes; but the flowers that spring from the Blooms, tra la, have surely nothing to do with this case.

In *Black Narcissus*, by contrast, Miss Godden has written a modest book beautifully within her powers. A group of Anglican nuns accepts the offer of a native prince to take over a deserted palace of dubious reputation standing on a windy slope of the Himalayas opposite Kangchenjunga. They arrive, install themselves, make slow headway with the natives, and accept reluctantly the assistance of Mr. Dean, who is the English agent and technically "a bad man"; gradually they give in to the easy-going mountain freedom which surrounds them and seems to mock at their tidy Western ways, and at last they decide, after a series of misfortunes, that it is indeed "no place for a nunnery" and they had better be moving on. The psychological changes in the Sisters are not perhaps very profoundly delineated; but Miss Godden has a sense of form and a feeling for the beauty of things and of words which never betray her into gush. *Black Narcissus* is in no sense a memorable book, but it has a flavour of its own and that is much.

The first chapter of *Penny World* (the narrator returning to his native town) is a little triumph of evocative description: anybody who can describe the shadow of a donkey-cart on a summer afternoon as "licking the hot kerb" clearly knows how to write. Unfortunately Mr. Chesterman fails to maintain this standard. There is much to admire in the outpourings of his neurotic egotist Andreas, who remains intent on the exploration of his own private and jealous sentiments and indifferent to the disintegration and collapse of his country. Though no country is named, the reference to the German invasion of Austria is unmistakable, and the satire admirable in its restraint. Indeed the little book is rich in intelligence, but its central theme is no more than a case-history, and one, for that matter, which has already been adequately treated in the voluminous pages of another novelist. To whom, for example, would you attribute the following passage?

> And whereas many incidents had made it plain to me that she was a girl of few gifts and no great understanding, and that we had scarcely a thought or a taste in common, this did not now prevent me from whispering to the pleats of the light-drenched curtains, "She is becoming every day kinder and more intelligent." But this would-be consolation, by implying also that Marcia was changing, only increased my discomfort.

Flute and Drums, the work of an Austrian exile, is a curious mixture of romance and realism. The framework is wildly picaresque: a Russian-Irish-American girl runs away from her conventional Swiss lover and wanders penniless through Italy during the summer before the Abyssinian war. Sandra herself is irritatingly whimsy and unreal; but the cross-section of Italian life is alive with all the endearing contradictions of a people fundamentally humanist and imperfectly subdued beneath the iron heel of Fascism. Miss Spiel writes well when she curbs her exuberant fancy.

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VIVISECTING HISTORY

The Anatomy of Revolution. By CRANE BRINTON. *Allen & Unwin.* 12s. 6d.

Mr. Crane Brinton is a conscientious political scientist, filled with the timidity, scepticism and respect for the successes of natural science which are typical of so many professors of the humanities. In the *Anatomy of Revolution* he has attempted, by an analysis of the English, American, French and Russian revolutions, "to discover some uniformities which might form the basis for a future sociology of revolutions"; and the result is an interesting collection of facts, which, despite the paraphernalia of scientific apparatus, refuses to develop into either a scientific or a historical whole. Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution* may be unscientific, but at least it takes the reader inside a real live revolution and enables him to see and feel how it happened; Mr. Brinton's brittle analyses and analogies tell me a lot about the atmosphere of Harvard, very little about that of the revolutions he describes. There is nothing against his book except that it fails.

Very sensibly, though he fails to acknowledge it, Mr. Brinton uses Thucydides' method of diagnosing the health of the body politic in medical terms, and therefore treats revolution as a fever. By this method he is able to show analogous phases both in the preconditions and in the course of his four revolutions. Each displays governmental inefficiency and the breakdown of the loyalty both of economic groups and of intellectuals; each is begun by moderates who are men of substance, and in each the terror is prefaced by a period of dyarchy, when the constitutional Government is menaced and finally overthrown by an extra-legal organisation; and finally each subsides in a Thermidor period, when, the attempt to introduce the puritan's millennium having failed, society settles down not in the old mould but in one not so far different as the revolutionary ideology demanded.

These similarities, as Mr. Brinton admits, were recognised before he wrote his book. What is important is not the fact but its significance, and about this, unfortunately, he has little to say. In his striving after scientific impartiality and suspicion of philosophies of history, he omits any interpretation of the uniformities he collects. This omission is really unscientific, since *mere* uniformities which do not increase our understanding or make prognosis possible are of interest to no one, certainly not to a scientist. Whether we seek to elucidate nature or human history, we must have some hypothesis which we seek to substantiate, though we may not be conscious of it. I suspect that Mr. Brinton's unconscious hypothesis is contained in his chance comment: "Perhaps, in spite of the efforts of philosophers, theologians, moralists, political theorists, social scientists, and a good many other inspired thinkers in the last two thousand years, social systems are still almost as perversely unaffected by revolutionary good intentions as tides or rubber bands."

Mr. Brinton may scoff at philosophies of history, but there is his own, the most ancient in the world, the philosophy of all conservatives from Aristotle to Burke and Baldwin. This is the theory behind his timidity, his dry scholastic wit and his deflation of the pretensions of men infatuated with ideas. His book is not the worse for possessing such a Weltanschauung; on the contrary, it would be far better if the author were conscious of it and marshalled the fascinating facts which he collects to demonstrate the thesis which is the guiding principle of his life and thought. If he had done so, he might have written a study of modern democracy worthy to be compared to Aristotle's *Politics*, which is nobly and unashamedly the work of a Greek conservative.

Indeed, a comparison with the *Politics* will illustrate both the strength and weakness of Mr. Brinton's book. The very name, the anatomy of revolution, indicates a resemblance between the two authors. Both have a static view of society, regarding it as a structure to be dissected, not as a changing process. In spite of his analogy of fever, Mr. Brinton uses the concepts not of biology but of physics for his analysis. How else could he rip four revolutions which were part of a single process of development out of their contexts, and lay them alongside one another upon the operating table? Each of those political revolutions was the agonised and convulsive jerk of society in disequilibrium, but we shall only understand them when we see that they were all jerks in the same direction. It is their serial nature which gives them their true significance. Because he failed to see Greek history as a process and only observed the structural analogies within it, Aristotle was able to offer no prognosis and was blind to the fact that the city State was already dead when he described it and praised its solid and eternal vitality. The same fate has befallen Mr. Brinton; he modestly disclaims any wish to offer a prognosis, but in truth his philosophy of life makes him incapable of doing so. Searching only for identical notes, he fails to hear the tune.

This failure to appreciate the significance of the time series and of change is common to many of our social scientists, and, though Marx avoided it, his followers generally did not. Mechanical materialism is the curse not only of Marxism, but of the anti-Marxist economic and social historians. Busy at their classification and dissection of historical events, they collect masses of evidence about everything except the direction of history. Thus their wisdom succeeds only in dulling the human will. We know more and more, but have no use for our knowledge, except inside universities where useless accumulation receives its modest but secure reward. Or worse, we state positively like one distinguished historian, "Men wiser and more learned than I have discerned in history a plot, a rhythm, a predetermined pattern. These harmonies are concealed from me. I can see only one emergency following upon another."

Mr. Brinton displays in Harvard the mock-humility and the arrogant scepticism of Oxford, which enables our highly educated professional classes to know a great deal and to understand nothing, to remain genteelly stable while their world is disintegrating, and to give the most excellent reasons for the sterility of their ideas and their impotence in action. Aware of change only as a subversive force, they seek to prove its futility; dimly conscious that history is leaving them behind, they vainly seek, by denying that men can control it, to discourage them from doing so, and by this very denial, they hand over the control either to blind economic forces or to men who deny the postulates of our European tradition. For the revolutions, which he so meticulously examines, are only the surface phenomena, and it is the subterranean convulsions—scientific inventions, economic developments, religious movements and so on—which are of lasting significance. They produce the revolutionary situation which the politicians exploit; and the obvious resemblances between the methods of revolutionaries and the temper of political revolutions should not be permitted to obscure the fundamental differences between the revolutionary situations themselves. By concentrating on the politics of revolutions, we unwittingly make them sudden isolated

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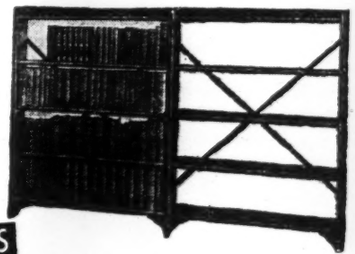

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episodes of violence in an otherwise placid historical development, whereas many of the most violent and ruthless changes have occurred in periods of apparent political tranquillity. To abstract political from social change is even more absurd than to study political institutions apart from their social structure, since a political revolution is precisely the moment when politics has no anatomy but has become a fluid process.

Which does not mean that the *Anatomy of Revolution* is without merits. Mr. Brinton has summarised a great deal of useful information, useful not only to students seeking academic honours, but to those who are unorthodox enough to believe that the understanding of the past finds its justification in the control and direction of the present.

R. H. CROSSMAN

HOELDERLIN

Hoelderlin. By RONALD PEACOCK. *Methuen.* 10s. 6d.

Thomas Mann's phrase, "Karl Marx should read Friedrich Hoelderlin," sums up the attitude of post-war pre-Hitler Germany to the poet whose work expresses in the purest form certain aspirations of the German spirit. Hoelderlin differed from the other romantic poets in the completeness with which he identified his life with the ideas of Greece and sought to renew through them the life of Germany in his time. Romantic poetry yearns towards a time and place which are unattainable to the poet, and therein lie its sadness and sense of frustration: but Hoelderlin's poetry produces the extraordinary impression that the poet has *become* the world of Greece which forms the subject of his greatest poetry. The only parallel to Hoelderlin I can think of is Van Gogh, who was unlike him in every other way, but whose landscapes give one the same sense that the artist has entered completely into an objective world outside himself: and both Van Gogh and Hoelderlin went mad. The artist is here so completely identified with his art that Mr. Peacock can, without seeming ridiculous, write of Hoelderlin the man as if he were writing of a poem by him:

> His work is inseparable from himself in a quite unusual measure. It is unsullied, immaculate. It scarcely does so much as to reflect evil or degradation—though it denounces them—or the fight with passion and baseness which many poets have had to maintain.

These words need not be interpreted to mean that there was no conflict in Hoelderlin's personal life: there obviously was, or there would not have been so complete a breakdown; and the chief fault of Mr. Peacock's otherwise excellent essay is to neglect this conflict. But certainly during his great period, Hoelderlin's achievement both in poetry and his view of life was a tremendous one. The breakdown was partly his own, partly the failure of the Germany of his time to afford him the slightest recognition or to offer the least resemblance to the world of Hoelderlin's vision.

Mr. Peacock has performed the great service of making it quite clear that the significance of Hoelderlin does not lie in his aberrations, not even in the romantic charm of his most popular poem, *Hyperions Schicksallied*, but in the completeness of a vision which was based on a profound understanding of Greek literature and thought, a knowledge of all the philosophical and literary movements of his time and a sympathy with the hopes offered to the world by the French Revolution and particularly by the writings of Rousseau. Nothing could be more wrong than the attempt of the surrealists to present him as a forerunner of surrealism, either as a view of life or as a technique of writing. As Mr. Peacock shows, not only was his view of poetry and life extremely well thought out, but he was the most conscious and studied of German poets. His poems were written again and again, partly to improve their writing, partly to add depth and universality to their vision. Even his later poems, in free verse rhythms, were based on an exact knowledge and practice of classical metres; and Mr. Peacock points out that Hoelderlin regretted that there were no schools for poets, to teach them all the forms available to their art.

This book has two faults, the first being, as I have said, Mr. Peacock's neglect of all but the barest outline of Hoelderlin's life, the second a certain dullness of exposition. But all the same, it is difficult to imagine a better and a less misleading book on a poet whose importance Europe has only become fully aware of in recent years. I have read many books on poets that have excited me more than this, but none that left me with such a sense that I understood the subject far better after reading it. More than this, I think that the chapters on Hoelderlin's attitude to nature are a real contribution to the subject of nature poetry; whereas the analysis of what Hoelderlin means by the gods in his poetry and the godliness in human relations is a clear expression of everything that D. H. Lawrence was fumbling after in his insistence on the "dark" sexual relation. His faith is summed up, in a tragic form, in the poem he wrote on his parting from Susette Gontard, Diotima of his poetry:

> Trennen wollten wir uns, waehnten es gut und klug:
> Da wir's thaten, warum schroekt uns wie Mord die That?
> Ach! Wir kennen uns wenig,
> Denn es waltet ein Gott in uns.
>
> (We wished to part; we thought it good and prudent; when it was done, why did the deed frighten us like murder? O! we know ourselves but little, for a god rules in us.)

Mr. Peacock adopts the method of analysing the elements in Hoelderlin's poetry, Nature and Life, Heroes, The Greeks, Diotima, Prophetic Poetry, The National in Nature and Poetry, etc., instead of dealing with his poetry in the various stages of its development. His method is justified, because he is thus able to sort out the elements which contribute to Hoelderlin's system; one has a very clear idea of that system and of why it broke down. Hoelderlin's tragedy was to create a world which was complete in its references to the historic past, its view of nature, and its analysis of the needs of the contemporary situation, but which still did not correspond to the real world. He entered a world which was not subjective, but which was not reality either. The point at which reality and his vision most nearly corresponded was his relationship with Diotima. When that broke down, he was faced on the one hand with the collapse of the life which he had created for himself, on the other with the certainty of his being drawn more and more into his vision, which no longer had any pretence of corresponding with reality. Thus we get, first, the poems on parting with and the death of Diotima; secondly, the poems of the Hoelderlin who was at the end of his spiritual resources and who had been "struck by the gods." He could not bring the gods back to earth, but they were sufficiently powerful to destroy him.

Mr. Peacock points out that the poems on the death of Diotima are unlike any other poems of mourning, because they produce the impression that the poet himself is dead, or that part of himself

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has died. And undoubtedly, in a sense this was true, because Diotima was the proof that Hoelderlin's view of existence was life; without it, it was death, or madness.

The Germany of Stefan George and Thomas Mann saw in Hoelderlin's work the possibility of a poetic view of life from which a new life might be made. They were justified in so far as Hoelderlin's philosophy which exists in his poetry is greatly superior to many other contemporary pseudo-religious views of life. But Hoelderlin has now sunk again to the rank of an "ineffectual angel." Will Germany, and perhaps Europe, again rediscover him as a prophet? STEPHEN SPENDER

THE FOREIGN SERVICE

Diplomacy. By HAROLD NICOLSON. Home University Library. *Thornton Butterworth.* 5s.

In the first few pages of this delightfully sensible book Mr. Nicolson exposes a confusion of thought common among the critics of "secret diplomacy." Foreign policy should be decided by Parliament, and the agreements it entails made public; but diplomacy is the business of international negotiation, which cannot successfully be conducted in public. Further, he deplores the increasing tendency of politicians to take a personal part in negotiation:

> The honours which are paid to a Minister in a foreign capital may tire his physique, excite his vanity, or bewilder his judgment. His desire not to offend his host may lead him, with lamentable results, to avoid raising unpalatable questions or to be unprecise regarding acute points of controversy . . . Diplomacy is not the art of conversation, it is the art of negotiating agreements in precise and ratifiable form. As such, it is, on all ordinary occasions, far better left to the professional diplomatist. His visits to the Foreign Office of the Government to which he is accredited arouse no public expectation, inspire no Press indiscretions, and if sterile lead to no public disappointments.

Mr. Nicolson proceeds to describe the ideal diplomatist, whose qualities are not those usually of the successful politician. Modesty and rectitude are particularly important. "The dangers of vanity in a negotiator can scarcely be exaggerated," and:

> The professional diplomatist, as other men, desires deeply to be regarded as a man of honour by those whom he respects. One of the advantages of professional diplomacy under the former system was that it produced and maintained a corporate estimate of character. It was the Stock Market of diplomatic reputation. It ungenerally knew that men such as Bülow, Aerenthal and Isnolsky were not to be wholly trusted; it was generally known that upon such men as Bethmann-Hollweg, the two Cambons, and Stolypin one could rely.

Anyone who has read Bülow's memoirs will agree that the gravest fault in a diplomatist is to be too clever by half. Mr. Nicolson makes an interesting distinction between two theories of diplomacy, the "warrior or heroic" and the "mercantile or shopkeeper." Under the former system the purpose of negotiation is victory, and the denial of complete victory means defeat. "A concession made, a treaty concluded, is apt to be regarded, not as the final settlement of an isolated dispute, but as evidence of weakness and retreat, as an advantage which must immediately be exploited in preparation for further triumph. The 'mercantile theory' is based upon the assumption that a compromise between rivalries is generally more profitable than the complete destruction of the rival. That negotiation is not a mere phase in a death-struggle, but an attempt by mutual concession to reach some durable understanding." German policy during the last eighty years reflects the "warrior" conception:

> It seems to them more important to inspire fear than to beget confidence; and when, as unavoidably happens, the frightened nations combine to protect themselves, the Germans complain of *Einkreisung* or "encirclement," wholly ignoring the fact that it is their own methods and menace which has produced this reaction.

On the other hand, the British are inclined to "assume that their own conception of the art of negotiation is shared more or less by those foreigners with whom they are negotiating":

> They are so accustomed, in domestic controversies, to invoke the principle of fair dealing and to rely upon settlement by compromise, that they do not understand that such conceptions are not always present in the minds of foreign negotiators. It was difficult, for instance, for those who worked under Sir Edward Grey to convince him that the envoy of some Balkan country did not possess the same sort of traditions, intuition and principles, as he had inherited himself: he was inclined to regard them, if not perhaps as Old Wykehamists, then at least as Old Marlburians. If subsequent development led him to revise this opinion, he would feel that a gross deception had been practised upon him, and would regard the foreign statesmen who had failed to live up to Old Marlburian standards as a man of unredeemable iniquity.
>
> The Americans, conversely, are convinced that all diplomatists are determined to ensnare, entangle and humiliate all those with whom they negotiate. They enter a conference as Daniel entered the den of lions, conscious that it is only their own bright faith and innocence which will preserve them from the claws of the wild beast by whom they are murdered.

Mr. Nicolson has similarly acute comments upon French and Italian methods, but it is more important to emphasise the faults of our own. The eighteenth-century writer, Callières, warned the diplomatist against the temptation of telling his own Government what they would *like* to hear, rather than what they *ought* to know; Mr. Nicolson reinforces the warning.

> The Foreign Office and the Cabinet are apt to prefer their optimistic to their pessimistic ambassadors, and to regard those who warn them of coming dangers or disasters as "slightly unbalanced," "neurotic" or "unsound" . . . If he (the ambassador) be a man of great integrity and will-power he will gladly undergo the unpopularity which assails the prophet of war, and assume the role of a Cassandra. But if he be a man of lesser character, he is tempted to reflect, and even to minister to, the severity of his rulers; great damage may be done thereby to British foreign policy.

Concurrently there is a grave danger, which Mr. Nicolson mentions but perhaps does not adequately emphasise, of diplomatists becoming too attached to the country to which they are accredited. When Mr. Page was in London during the war, his pro-British feelings were so violent that he ceased to be valuable, even to the British: the President did not so much as read his despatches. Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, more Turkish than the Turks, is another notorious example of this failing; and, when the despatches of the last few years are published, it is not impossible that new and distressing instances may be revealed. The diplomatist in a "difficult" post in his natural desire to improve relations is tempted to colour the facts, and to pursue the smiles of the Government to which he is accredited at the expense of his own Government and its natural allies.

The main weakness, according to Mr. Nicolson, of the British Foreign Service is "the accumulation in the higher ranks of

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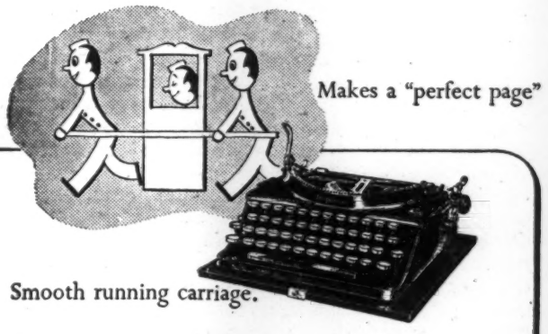

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by KINGSLEY MARTIN

WITH questions this week in the House and answers from the Home Secretary on the special powers of interrogation granted to the Police under the Official Secrets Acts, Mr. Kingsley Martin's pamphlet should be bought at once by everyone who is concerned to see the limitation of these powers.

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men who, although they have made no serious blunders and have displayed adequate judgment and energy, are not really fitted for the responsibilities of their posts." The remedy he suggests is a fusion of the diplomatic and consular branches. Finance and vested interests are the main obstacles to this reform, which he considers "essential."

I should like to quote a number of other passages from this wise, witty, comprehensive and enlightening book. It deserves the attention both of "Left" politicians, whose criticisms of the Foreign Office and the Diplomatic Service are often more vehement than well-informed, and of Mr. Chamberlain's supporters, who frequently refer to the Foreign Office with the contemptuous dislike that is excited in the ignorant by experts. Finally, may I suggest to the publishers that the book be quickly produced at the usual price of the Home University Library? The chief purpose of this series, we always understood, was to make knowledge more widely available; and to raise the price of one volume, seemingly because it is particularly good, is a strange decision on the part of editors so public-spirited as Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, Professor Gilbert Murray and Dr. Julian Huxley.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

THE POPULAR FRONT AT WORK

The Whig Party, 1807–1812. By MICHAEL ROBERTS. *Macmillan.* 25s.

This is an admirable contribution (admirable both in its depth of research and in its presentation of the results of research) to the series of Studies in Modern History, of which Professor Namier is the distinguished editor. The book should obviously be carefully read by all who teach history and by all who hope to win the good graces of their teachers in an examination, as it upsets several preconceived notions about the motives and the aims of the Opposition during these years. Nor is the book without interest for the general public and in particular for politicians. As a book for the general reader as distinct from the historical specialist, it would have gained from a rather longer introduction explaining the fortunes of the party and the various divisions in it since the Fox and North Coalition. The modern fashion for an exact and microscopic examination of a short period of history, which is perhaps the distinctive contribution of the twentieth century to historical study, is open to two dangers. The first is the temptation to write in a strain of insolent superiority of previous workers on the period who, since they were working on a broader canvas without the facilities of modern research, are not really fair game for gibes. Mr. Roberts has avoided this danger and writes with an understanding of other people's work which is refreshing. The other danger affects the reputation of the people whose career is examined. The total effect of the motives which inspire political action in mankind is never pleasing. The same examination of either the Duke of Portland's government or Mr. Perceval's government would show the same mainspring of ambition, selfishness and indecisiveness. Even the present administration, which can glibly sacrifice an able minister to the electoral needs of its dreary country members and has systematically rewarded incompetent ministers with high office so as not to hurt their feelings will fare no better at the hands of the historian of the future. If, in this book, the Whigs appear a rather shambling, shuffling lot they are no worse than all other English politicians.

Indeed, the ministries that the Opposition fought were so feeble, so hampered by benign but incompetent old gentlemen, that it is impossible to believe that the Whigs, with a concerted effort, could not have toppled them over. No doubt, as Professor Roberts hints, they suffered greatly from their record in office as supporters of the Ministry of All the Talents. They suffered particularly, as he points out, from a shocking military record during their period of office. He does, however, explain that part of the incompetence of the Ministry of All the Talents was due to their enormous majority and that only a small part of that patchwork host was truly Whig. As the *Morning Chronicle*, the official Whig organ, pertinently asked, "Had they begun their Administration with great and extensive Reforms we ask how many days they would have remained in office. . . .?"

Perhaps even more hampering to their efficiency in Opposition and to their prospects of office, was their inability to agree on any important issue. Professor Roberts has wisely divided his book into sections dealing with the principal issues of the time, namely, Catholic Emancipation, the conduct of the War and Reform. On all those questions the differences within the party were deep and acute. Emancipation was probably the subject on which the aristocratic Whigs felt most strongly: it was certainly the bond which tied Lord Grey to the Grenvilles. In normal times that issue would probably have formed a rallying point round which all the Opposition would have gathered and from which they would have proceeded with enthusiasm to overthrow the Government. It had one great advantage in Whig eyes that it involved a struggle with the Crown for which the Whigs, nurtured on the battles of the 1770's and 1780's, were only too eager. As Professor Roberts says:

> The Whigs still regarded the King much as Burke had regarded him—as the fount of corruption; they still believed that the influence of the Crown had increased. . . .

Unhappily for the Whigs the case for Catholic Emancipation was so strong that it attracted the support of many of their rivals. Professor Roberts dates the end of the Whig monopoly of the question from 1812. On the other burning questions of the day Whig divisions were too deep and various to admit of their presenting a Popular Front to the Tory Government. This is well illustrated by a consideration of the Whig attitude to the War. It varied from a small group, which was pacifist and would have echoed Hazlitt's words: "It was not the danger of invasion which produced the taking up of arms, but the determination to take up arms which produced the fear of invasion," to Grey and Grenville who, recognising that peace was impossible, devoted their criticism to the way in which the War was conducted. The leader of the pacifist group was that somewhat curious politician Whitbread, who is the subject of sympathetic study by Professor Roberts. The whole history of this Whig Opposition is fascinating and even instructive for politicians of future ages. It is, for example, interesting to set the enthusiasm of the Whigs for intervention in Spain and to contrast that enthusiasm with the pusillanimity of the modern gentleman of England. As Professor Roberts writes: "To some of them, and above all to Lord Holland, it seemed that to fight for Spain was to fight for light against darkness, liberty against tyranny, Whig principles against des-

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potism. To them it seemed that the Spanish struggle concentrated the issues of the War in such a form that no moral man, and therefore no Whig, could refuse his support." The word Whig was a wide term embracing as it did "the damn'd neuters" (or Simonites) who followed the Duke of Portland into place down to the extreme radicals like Folkestone, Burdett and Whitbread. Even the Opposition Whigs were as different as Creevey from Lord Wellesley or chalk from cheese. It was the Popular Front at work. How far their futility in opposition was due to that fact might well be pondered by a modern Labour leader.

ROGER FULFORD

CHINA FIGHTS BACK

China Fights Back. By AGNES SMEDLEY. *Gollancz.* 7s. 6d.

Few who meet Agnes Smedley fail to be impressed by her greatness. I use the word greatness deliberately because, although she has her human failings and weaknesses, she has the greatness which comes from singleness of purpose, complete unself-consciousness and the kind of burning sympathy for the misery and wrongs of mankind which some of the saints and some great revolutionaries have possessed. For her the wounded soldiers of China, the starving peasants and the overworked coolies are brothers in a real sense. She is acutely, vividly, aware of their misery and cannot rest for trying to alleviate it. Never one of those doctrinaire revolutionaries who love the masses in the abstract but are cold to the sufferings of individuals, Agnes Smedley, whilst writing books and articles and throwing all her magnificent Western American energy into the political struggle and the war against Japan, finds time also to help a multitude of individuals. My first sight of her was on the Bund at Hankow where she had found some wounded men who had walked miles from the front and was putting them in rickshaws and transporting them to hospital at her own expense.

Her extraordinary lack of vanity and self-consciousness, as well as her complete disregard of her own material advantage, give her influence over all sorts and kinds of people, and in Hankow there were few foreign correspondents or even diplomats or consular officials who could resist her appeals.

This book is a diary of the months which she spent with the 8th (Communist) Route Army in the first winter of the war. It is the human counterpart of Edgar Snow's *Red Star over China.*

Marching with the army, or carried with it on a stretcher, after injuring her back, she is all the time trying to see the war through the eyes of the soldiers. Sharing their life and their dangers, she nevertheless never forgets that she is having an easier time than they, that because she is not cold or hungry she cannot feel what they feel. Most people who had done what she has done would be too conscious of their own heroism to remember that their hardships and difficulties were less than those of their companions. But Agnes Smedley, born in a mining camp in Colorado and reared in poverty, never forgets and is never quite happy because she knows no intellectual can really understand. Not for her the easy assumptions of so many pseudo-Communists that they understand the minds and feelings of the masses. Not for her the facile slogans. She wants to know the reality and is never satisfied because she realises she must always stand a little outside. She has been ten years in China and the Chinese people have become her own people, but she knows still that she is not completely one of them although she is no longer an American.

> To-night as those hungry men sang, and then as they marched away to their beds of straw or cornstacks spread on mud floors, their singing had more meaning to me than ever before. Their voices were like a strong orchestra in the night. I, who have had food this day, realised that I can never know fully the meaning, the essence of the Chinese struggle for liberation, which lies embedded in the hearts of these workers and peasants. I am still an onlooker and my position is privileged. I will always have food though these men hunger. I will have clothing and a warm bed though they freeze. They will fight and many of them will lie on frozen battlefields. I will be an onlooker. I watched them blend with the darkness of the street; they still sang. And I hungered for the spark of vision that would enable me to see into their minds and hearts and picture their convictions about the great struggle for which they give more than their lives.

There is something of the poet in Agnes Smedley. She can create for us a vision of the grey skies of winter over frozen earth, grey walls, bare hills, and men cold and hungry who keep marching and fighting over the hills, kept alive by the fires of enthusiasm and hope.

> Last night we returned to this city, approaching its great grey walls in the late afternoon. The wintry wind swept through the barren branches of the spruce trees; the dry weeds bent to the earth, trembling; the dry grass crackled. Short dirty icicles hung from the hair on the legs of camels that lumbered along in a caravan of military supplies.
>
> They came swiftly as if it were early morning and they had just arisen from bed. Yet they had marched most of the night. They carried their rifles, some men two, their dismantled machine guns and their bedding rolls on their backs. One wave of a thousand would pass, then we would go on for a few minutes and stand aside for another column. There was about them an eagerness, an exultation, that did not express itself in laughter, though there was much laughter and now and then a snatch of singing. . . .
>
> It seemed to me that I was passing through one of the greatest moments in Chinese history, and in the history of the world. The scene seemed unreal, yet as real as the stone cliffs. The iron Chinese people, destined to decide the fate of all Asia, and in countless ways the destiny of mankind, stepped up out of the darkness, passed, and then, with swift and silent march, plunged into the darkness again. . . . The figures appeared and disappeared and a great excitement filled me. I wanted to follow, to go where they led, to be with these men of destiny.

But always her desire to suffer with the masses, her intense desire not to be merely an onlooker, is frustrated by that lack of vanity which prevents her becoming a martyr and being a nuisance to the very people to whom she is devoting her life and energy. At the end of the book when she wants to go to the front once more, Chu Teh dissuades her by saying that they want her to live and work, not go to Wutaishan and die.

> "Chinese are dying in Wutaishan," I replied, but Chu Teh replied with justice "That cannot be helped."

Only when Chu Teh says he will have a strong force to protect her if she goes does she give way because she could not let men be withdrawn from other duties to protect her.

You will not find in this book long interviews with Chinese Communist leaders and Commanders giving their official views, but you will get closer to the spirit of the men and leaders of the 8th Route Army than in any other book published, or likely to be published. For the author, alone amongst those who have visited China's Northwest, has participated for a decade in the struggle for emancipation of the Chinese people.

FREDA UTLEY

SIR DONALD CAMERON

My Tanganyika Service (and Some Nigeria). By SIR DONALD CAMERON, G.C.M.G., K.B.E. *Allen and Unwin.* 10s. 6d.

Here certainly is an historical document—worth a dozen treatises on colonial policy. The general reader will also find it a lively fragment of autobiography—by a colonial Governor with a sharp wit, an unusual constructive vision, and a gift for getting things done. In telling the story of the transformation wrought in Tanganyika during his governorship, 1925–31, Sir Donald Cameron has allowed himself to range over the whole field of colonial politics with a frankness of comment which disregards the usual considerations of expediency. Those who have worked with him will see again the disarming illumination of the smile that may follow his sharpest barbs. The merest layman will get a vivid idea of the nature of the job, and of a very striking personality; those with some knowledge will get much to ponder, and some will be delighted by a number of beautifully suave indiscretions.

When Sir Donald took over the administration of Tanganyika seven years after the war the Territory was still sorely stricken. This experience gives point to his weighty protest against any retransfer of territory to Germany. Not only will such action shatter the faith of Africans everywhere, but, without satisfying the Germany that now is, it would subject our dependants to a devastating change of regime, and again, almost certainly, to such outrage as befell them in the purely European-made quarrel of 1914–18.

Sir Donald's claims are large, but not unwarranted. In 1925 Tanganyika Territory was dependent on loans (*not* free grants) from the British Treasury, and essential services were starved; outlying districts were without roads; some broken if not starving tribes had never seen and hardly believed in the existence of a British Governor. By 1931, thanks to his reconstructive work, the colony was paying not only its own way but debt charges on former Treasury loans. The material and social conditions of the people had been raised by the improvement of transport and of their food

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supplies. Education had been made a State Service. A Legislative Council "afforded opportunity for the ventilation of public affairs" and "a place was assured for the African in the political future of the country." In particular "the African is being trained to manage his own local affairs under a system of local government." "I had, I believe," he claims, "a fairly sound and comprehensive knowledge of the condition of the Territory." Never shall I forget the cross-examination I enjoyed one morning in Dar-es-Salaam when he put my powers of observation to the test after a tour of a good many of his districts! I can testify also that, autocratic as he may sound, Sir Donald had in 1930 a most devoted Service, enthusiastic for the Cameron reforms, and the Cameron version of "Indirect Rule."

It is not always realised that this version differed in essentials from the Northern Nigerian practice, which has been so well advertised and is often accepted as Gospel. Here it comes in for some shrewd comment. "Native Administration" there (like "Native Affairs" elsewhere) is sometimes regarded as "some rather mysterious business understood only by the initiated," and quite different from the business of government as practised in the outside world. Sir Donald speaks generally of "Native local government" rather than of "Indirect Rule," looking upon the former as training for wider and more democratic participation in Government as a whole. Sir Donald's principle is that "correctly" applied the system must consider "the people, not the Chief." Not all the apostles of Indirect Rule act on this; but at least one officer I met lately on another part of the West Coast put it that the problem often is to "save the people from the chief." A good many will note with surprise that the first step in Tanganyika, having commuted traditional tribute from their people and placed chiefs on salary, was to secure from them a return in the form of "responsible service on behalf of their people"—further, that the original *Native* Authorities Ordinance "was for the greater part an enactment authorising the British and not the Native Authority to give orders." This is necessary in case the chiefs should fail in their duty and Native institutions fail to grow to the needs of civilised government. No one will admit to belonging to the "Museum school," who here get their deserts, yet on the spot lately I have seen evidence that it is almost the most settled point of rather indefinite policy to discourage any development that may upset the Native *status quo*. Here it is emphasised that all else will fail "if we fail in our efforts to improve materially the economic condition of the masses. Scarcely the fringes have been reached, by Colonial Office Committees, by peripatetic Commissions writing reports, or by any other means." Moreover:

> It would be more profitable to the African to spend money from outside sources in promoting his material progress, so far as that may be possible, than it would be to spend the same money in a survey—we hear so much of "surveys"—to ascertain why the African is physically and mentally deficient: as he definitely is not as a general proposition.

In different context are the suggestions that the Colonial Office might not even detect a change of policy following a change of governors, and that "no one, save probably the officers in the field, seems to care a great deal for the philosophy of the thing."

The book, in short, is closely packed with the mature observations of the strongest colonial governor of our time on the whole system and method of British colonial rule.

W. M. MACMILLAN

OUT OF THE STRONG CAME FORTH . . .

The Holy Terror. By H. G. WELLS. *Michael Joseph.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

In *The Shape of Things to Come*, one of Mr. Wells's best books, the next war rages until the physical basis of society is broken up and the issues are forgotten and plague and famine threaten to destroy the human race itself. Salvation comes in the end from the fraternity of the air; this new chivalry decides to cease fighting, to forget anachronistic ideas of nationalism, and to re-make the world on intelligent cosmopolitan lines. *The Holy Terror* gives, in the form of a novel, a somewhat similar picture of the future, but the war ends at a much earlier and more hopeful point. After the first months of intensive campaigns the supply of raw materials begins to run short and the morale breaks down everywhere. 'The common man" revolts against this monstrous horror and absurdity and finds a rallying point in the group led by Rud Whitlow, who claims to be himself the personification of all common men. Imbued with ideas of world government, this group includes the airmen who had to do the job by themselves in *The Shape of Things to Come*. We are left with a picture of a world whose ultimate authority is centralised in the hands of men who have not been spoiled by power and whose ideas about most subjects broadly coincide with Mr. Wells's twentieth century liberalism.

Mr. Wells's vitality is as robust as ever and his account of the early days of Rud has all the charm of the best Wellsian story-telling. We watch the development of the Holy Terror in his middle-class surroundings. He is a ruthless boy with a contempt for current conventions and moralities; he is always out for victory and does not mind whether he is punching a girl or disobeying the Queensberry Rules. "'What can you *do* with a boy like that?' Nobody had found a satisfactory solution to the problem. Many suggestions were made, from 'knocking his little block off' to 'give him more love.'" A coming Hitler, one says to oneself, but Rud develops differently and not quite convincingly. He goes to Camford, studies hard and comes out with a passionate hatred of cruelty and an almost liberal love for humanity. Rud's racy comments on the world give Mr. Wells great opportunities. All the different social groups come in for their due share of ridicule. I am particularly pleased with his account of the intellectuals—"too many ideas and no conclusions to them—like a plague of Manx cats on the brain." Rud collects a group of able followers and by a little rough stuff and a smart trick or two overthrows the Purple Shirts, exposes their destructive intentions, and drives their leader, Lord Bohun, into exile. Rud's own movement is a kind of humanitarian Fascism. The movement spreads during the war and comes to the top at the end of it with surprisingly little opposition. A few would-be dictators with old-fashioned nationalist ideas have to be got rid of by bombs or otherwise, but in general Rud wins the common consent of humanity. The story of Rud's conquest of power is necessarily sketchy and somewhat disappointing after the brilliant account of his childhood. We are left wondering whether it is true, as Rud says, that you need not "destroy" when you "clear away," and one is not at all convinced that people who have been subjected to the horrors that Mr. Wells describes in the war, and who have revolted against their leaders, could, in fact, be imbued with the excellent ideas of Rud and his friends, and be so readily obedient to the new world state. A Liberal Fascism or Communism (Mr. Wells would use either word), comes, if not without tears, at least with less than that educational preparation that one would have thought necessary. In the end, like many former dictators, Rud goes mad in his isolated divinity. A benevolent doctor gives him an altruistic dose of poison and we are left to feel that the revolution of the common man is to proceed, if not with uniform success, at least with a spacious hopefulness. One must not be too captious if Mr. Wells has indulged in a little wishful thinking. His moral, after all, is at least as old as Plato's—that there is no hope for the world until power is combined with intellect and benevolence, and we need not blame Mr. Wells if he has not surmounted the obstacle that "power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

KINGSLEY MARTIN

Britons in Spain. A History of the British Battalion of the XVth International Brigade. By WILLIAM RUST. *Lawrence and Wishart.* 2*s.*

This is indeed a novel addition to the long row of finely bound histories of the various regiments of the British army that you can see on the shelves of any public library. It is of course a propagandist history, but we doubt if it suppresses or adorns more than the stately volumes of official army records. It describes a unique incident in British history. For there is no parallel to this expedition of two thousand young Englishmen making their way over the Pyrenees, in spite of official discouragement and much mean obliquy, to fight for a cause they believed in. There they joined other national battalions who regarded the Spanish war as the decisive stand against the Fascist advance. They were the working-class International in action against the Fascist International—none the less the working-class International because a considerable minority of the volunteers were men of University education and middle-class upbringing. These men fought as shock troops, stiffening the raw Spanish levies during the first grim struggle round Madrid and serving always in the forefront of the battle until the Spanish Government's decision to do without all non-Spanish combatants. If that decision was meant to shame Britain and France into a genuine insistence on the withdrawal of the far larger numbers of Italian troops, it was a mistake. There is only this compensation—that the British

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DUCHESS. The Corn is Green. W., S., 2.30
DUKE OF YORKS. Nora. Tues., Sat.
LYRIC. The Flashing Stream. Wed. & Thurs.
MERCURY. The Playboy. Fri., Sat.
PALACE. Under Your Hat. Wed., Sat.
QUEEN'S. Dear Octopus. Wed. & Sat.
ST. JAMES. Geneva. Wed. & Sat.
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WESTMINSTER. Doctor's Dilemma. Feb. 18
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THE CORN IS GREEN
A Comedy by EMLYN WILLIAMS.

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AUSTIN TREVOR. JOHN ABOTT.
Produced by MARIUS GORING.

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WORTH A MILLION
A Farce in 3 Acts by Vernon Sylvaine

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ON WEDNESDAY, FEB. 15TH, 1939, AT 8.30 P.M.
A GREAT CONCERT
will be held in aid of the
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EXHIBITION

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IF you missed the announcement of our competition send for particulars, for you have yet time to enter. RULES, Maiden Lane, W.C.2. Lunches, Dinners and late Suppers, licensed till midnight. Established 1780.

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Brigade, which had lost the extremely high proportion of a fifth of its total killed (or shot as prisoners), would otherwise have been wiped out altogether; it would not have saved itself and could not have stemmed this last attack on Catalonia in which Franco's aeroplanes, tanks and guns outnumbered those of the Republic by at least seven to one. Mr. Rust's record is valuable; it tells the story, with excellent photographs, gives details of the campaign and ends with a roll of honour which is none the less memorable because it belongs to a first consciously political army raised in Britain since the days of Cromwell's Ironsides.

Impromptu in Moribundia. By PATRICK HAMILTON. *Constable.* 7s. 6d.

Flying Dutchman. By MICHAEL ARLEN. *Heinemann.* 7s. 6d.

These two books are both political allegories—a difficult form of literature in which there are only two possible scores, hit or miss. Mr. Hamilton, wisely choosing a well-defined target, hits it with precision and *Impromptu in Moribundia* is not only extremely amusing but an excellent piece of social satire. Beginning in the mood of Wellsian scientific phantasy, he projects his hero out of Chandos Street on a journey through space, and brings him to a world where the mythology of capitalist society is brought to life. In Moribundia people talk and behave as our advertisers, press lords and poets laureate would have us believe that we ourselves do. Society is stratified into the correct leisured and working-classes, and in his description of this singularly loathsome world Mr. Hamilton is able to make some excellent jokes and some shrewd Marxian criticism. Both the cricket match *à la* Newbolt and the worker who lives in luxury on the dole and keeps his coal in the bath are excellently described, and the chapter of literary criticism includes some shrewd digs at Wells, Shaw, and Eliot. The book ends with a really terrifying nightmare, in which the hero is chased by a horde of "little men." Mr. Arlen has been more ambitious. In *The Flying Dutchman*, he has taken Stavrogin out of Dostoievsky's *The Possessed* and put him to live with *These Charming People*. His hero is an international arms-financier, beyond good and evil, who finds a superhuman pleasure in selling arms to both sides and organising a rather ineffective anarchist movement. But Mr. Arlen cannot manage melodrama, far less melodrama of ideas, and his book as a result is pretentious, sloppy and dull. By deserting his post-war flippancies and becoming serious, he has lost all that excellent social criticism which he displayed—unintentionally perhaps—in his frivolous books. It is to be hoped that next time he will put off adult things and talk about the people he understands in the brittle style which he can do so well.

The Magnificent Rothschilds. By CECIL ROTH. *Hale.* 12s. 6d.

The Rothschilds with which this book is chiefly concerned are the first Lord Rothschild and his two brothers, Alfred and Leopold. Mr. Roth has not been able to draw upon any important new material, and has therefore had to content himself with assembling facts and anecdotes from a variety of published sources. The story is not specially edifying: Baron Lionel had obtained from the Liberals the right of Jews to sit in the Commons, and his son "Natty" began as a supporter of Mr. Gladstone. But, when the Liberals proposed to give justice to the Irish, a people no less oppressed than the Jews, "Natty," for whom Mr. G. had at last extracted a peerage from the reluctant Queen, joined the Opposition, and survived to be one of the most violent adversaries of Mr. Lloyd George's Social Services. Their charities were great; they gave lavishly alike to poor Jews and rich Gentiles. As capitalists, they were honest and patriotic, nor could the anti-Semite find anything in their history to justify his frenzy. Mr. Roth compares the Rothschild brothers to Lorenzo the Magnificent—hence the title of his book. But the Medici immortalised themselves as patrons of contemporary art, while the Rothschilds, as far as one can discover, did little or nothing to encourage the arts. They spent vast sums upon the more showy sorts of "Louis" furniture, but where living painters, writers and composers were concerned, remained as rigidly Philistine as any English Duke.

The Book of the Ways of God. By EMIL G. KRAELING, Ph.D. *Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.* 10s. 6d.

This work on the Book of Job, by an American scholar, presupposes not only much interest in the Book of Job, but also a rather full knowledge of it, and it sets a considerable tax upon the reader's powers of concentration. It is somewhat heavy and inelegant in style, and not a little dull, though a few brightly lit pages atone for some of these imperfections. All the sources and derivations of the Book of Job (for it seems to have been by more than one writer) are elaborately discussed, and it attempts (sometimes successfully) "the higher realms of interpretation." There is, of course, nothing in the interpretation quite so illuminating as the eight illustrations by William Blake, with which the book is adorned. As Dr. Kraeling says, "There is no dearth of good commentaries. . . . There are also good popular treatises on this theme, but they leave the reader in the dark with respect to many matters of detail." Dr. Kraeling sees himself "before an elect company composed of students of religion, literature, philosophy and art." But it is perhaps more particularly a book for students of religion—for inquiring and broad-minded theologians.

About Motoring

THE FIVE-SPEED CHRYSLER

FOR a number of years British motorists have adjudged the Chrysler to be just about the best of the American importations at its price and power. They have allotted it such pride of place on its road manners, general reliability, and satisfactory performance, coupled no doubt with first-class service from the London depot, since no imported car is long tolerated unless it is supported by an efficient organisation within easy reach. It is much to the credit of the Chrysler that it continues to sell very freely indeed in these islands now that reduced motor taxation has encouraged many of us to own cars far larger than we dreamt of buying a few seasons ago, and inspired British makers to build cars closely resembling the powerful American sixes in price and performance. Yesterday, for example, I spent a day at the wheel of a 23.4 h.p. "Wimbledon" Chrysler, priced at £400 on the English market. It obviously competes with such cars as the 25 h.p. Vauxhall (which, I suppose, might fairly be described as an English-built car on American lines) and the 25 h.p. Wolseley, which is British to the backbone. The Vauxhall costs £345, and the Wolseley £395, so that both British sixes are less expensive than the Chrysler. I have no information as to the relative sales of these three cars at the moment, but a trip along any busy road will demonstrate the fact that the more expensive American vehicle wins a great many votes in spite of its price (£55 more than the Vauxhall, and £5 more than the Wolseley). The Wimbledon which I drove was no faster on the flat than either of its obvious rivals, so the visible preference for it in the minds of some English buyers is evidently based upon acquaintance with its quality.

So far as merits which cannot be photographed or tabulated are concerned, its outstanding feature is its superb steering, which is quite phenomenally light. Too many large cars have to be hauled round slow corners, and demand some exertion even when the car is moving easily. I have very seldom handled such effortless steering as distinguishes this car, and I should advise a good many designers, both at home and abroad, to analyse the mechanical factors by which this delicious ease is obtained. I was so impressed that I deliberately visited certain corners which I normally detest, such as rightangled bends on hills, and fast corners which have to be taken against the camber. I could not fault the Chrysler steering. To a robust male this asset is perhaps merely sentimental; but to a weakling or to an average woman it is important.

The second outstanding feature (shared nowadays with a few other cars, but not too many) is the overdrive. Fundamentally, the Chrysler like several other chassis of American design, possesses but three forward gears. But its costlier models have an "overdrive," which in effect furnishes two ratios both on 2nd and 3rd gears, making a total of five forward gears—one more than the typical British car possesses. The action of this overdrive cannot be detailed in the space at my disposal; it embodies a hand control which need not be utilised. In roadwork at speeds over roughly 20 miles an hour, the driver lets up his accelerator pedal for a fraction of a second, and the overdrive is automatically engaged. Should he then encounter traffic, a hill, or other circumstance suggesting a lower gear, he presses his accelerator flat down for a fortieth of a second, and the car instantly returns to the lower version of whichever gear (2nd or top) happens to be in mesh. The more direct changes from either 2nd to either top are synchro-meshed and foolproof. The owner is thus provided with a total of five forward gears, and as he can start on 2nd with consummate ease, he only uses the two upper gears on the lever unless he has to climb a precipitous hill; the normal changes between these two gears are as childishly simple as any change on the road; and the changes between their respective upper and lower versions are pluperfect—effortless, inaudible, and instantaneous. The nett effect of this layout is that although the car is by no means extraordinarily fast in terms of its maximum speed (my sample did not readily exceed 70 m.p.h. on the flat), an abnormally high average can be maintained with perfect ease in roadwork, since the engine is always pulling on a suitable gear ratio.

Admirable suspension and a smooth engine combine with this ingenious layout, superfine steering and splendid brakes to make 50–60 miles an hour a pleasant and entirely safe speed wherever road conditions permit. Incidentally, the gear lever is carried under the left-hand side of the steering wheel after the fashion

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ACHILL ISLAND (Slievemore Hotel, Dugort). Largest and oldest established Hotel on the island. A.A. and R.I.A.C. appointed. Situated at the foot of Slievemore Mountain, close safe bathing strand. Good fishing. Reduced terms May, June and September. Apply HOPE CLAPHAM.

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IF you find Town too dear and noisy or suburbs too dull you would probably be happier at Welwyn. Houses in this pleasant little Hertfordshire town (30 minutes from King's Cross) are for sale for £700 to £3,000 or to rent from £66 to £200 p.a. Illustrated details on request from N. S. WILLIAMS, The Estate Office, Welwyn Garden City. Welwyn Garden 248.

FOUR-room, third floor flat on Campden Hill, to let. £2 15*s.* a week furnished, or unfurnished, £2 10*s.* Blüthner piano. Kitchen and bathroom. Ring or write MUNDY, 16 Stanley Gardens, W.11. Park 8602.

BEAUTIFULLY furnished ground-floor flat. One large room, kitchen, bathroom, private garden, facing south. 3 *gns.* per week. RICHARDSON, 133 Ebury Street, S.W.1. Slo. 5655.

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A NEW carpet material, hand woven in Cyprus of pure wool and flax, is very durable, reversible and half the price of Indian carpets. Send for samples to sole importer, GERALD HOLTOM, 259b Tottenham Court Road, W.1. Mus. 5119.

MAHOGANY Bookcase, size 8½ft. × 8½ft. Spacious cupboards holding 800 books. 6 Kelmscott Road, S.W.11.

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"FREE SERVICE."—Accommodation recommended, Town, Country and Suburbs. ANNE PAGE. Dorland House, 14 Lower Regent Street, S.W.1. Whitehall 3258.

LADY with charming little home desires paying guests. Modern indoor conveniences; comfortable home to secure in case of emergency. WAYLEN, Cerne Abbas, Dorset.

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HOLLAND PARK. Large, bright divan rooms overlooking garden square. From 22*s.* 6*d.* H. and c., gas fires. Park 4329.

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LECTURE room (seating 80) available for social meetings, lectures, pupils' concerts, etc. For terms, apply SECRETARY, 34 Nottingham Place, W.1.

BUSTON MANOR, Hunton ('Phone: 85174), near Maidstone, Kent, for small conferences, schools, parties, etc. Moderate week-end terms. Enquiries invited.

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HAVE your favourite suit copied exactly in a "John Peel" Cumberland Tweed, £4 17*s.* 6*d.* Fit guaranteed or money refunded. Patterns and particulars post free. REDMAYNE, LTD., 10 Wigton, Cumberland.

A REALLY complete garden service including planning, construction, planting, advising, lawn culture, tree surgery, paths, carriage drives, draining, town gardens, country estates, roof gardens to window boxes. Consult JOHN SIMON, F.R.H.S., 525 Finchley Road, N.W.3. 'Phone: HAMpstead 1081.

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PURCHASE MONEY RETURNED in full if satisfaction not given. CARWARDINE'S CHALLENGE TEA, every leaf guaranteed choice Indian and Ceylon tea, 2*s.* 2*d.* per lb.; 6 lbs. post paid, 13*s.* STEPHEN CARWARDINE & CO., LTD., Tea Blenders (since 1777), 4/5 Victoria House, Southampton Row, London, W.C.1.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Rates and all information on page 225

GREECE, SICILY and ISTANBUL
20 DAYS—43 GNS. FULLY INCLUSIVE
Applications are invited for the few vacancies in the s.s. "Cairo City" (9,600 tons) sailing from Marseilles on April 6th to Agrigento, Delphi, Athens, Olympia, Istanbul, Lesbos, Crete, etc. One-class Cruise now from 43 to 75 gns., including rail fare London to Marseilles return, all meals en route, and all inland excursions.
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A Postal Subscription to any address in the World costs
One year, post free, **30s. 0d.** Six Months, post free, **15s. 0d.**
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NEW STATESMAN AND NATION,
10 GT. TURNSTILE, LONDON, W.C.1.

For cleaning Silver, Electro Plate, &c. Plate Powder 6d 1/- & 2/-
"Goddard's" Liquid Polish 9d & 1/3

introduced by Darracq nearly forty years ago; and as the hand-brake is a pistol grip under the right-hand corner of the dashboard, the floorboards are left entirely free of all projections. For a driver of average stature the whole system and arrangement of controls is perfect; every one of them is beautifully designed, and comes naturally to hand. No car can boast a more natural hand-brake layout. Even the spokes of the steering wheel are rounded to fit the grasp, so that on long journeys the hand can be shifted from rim to spoke for a change of position.

Descending to comparatively petty details, the luggage locker lid and bonnet sides automatically prop themselves up when opened. A telltale on the dash informs the driver when his headlamps are in their dazzle position. There are two efficient screenwipers of real power, with individual switches; and they park themselves right out of the vision line. There are arm rests on both front doors—a most uncommon provision. The ashtrays incorporate "put-out" cups for cigarettes. There is a useful pass-cum-fog lamp. All four quarter-lights are independently adjustable for ventilation purposes. Nothing has been overlooked, and it is clear that prolonged experience has wrestled with every single detail, both practical and mechanical, until a really satisfactory solution has been reached.

The fuel consumption is high under hard driving—apparently about 17 miles per gallon at the speed to which this fine car tempted me. I can only make three insignificant criticisms. The lines are handsome with the exception of the very aggressive bonnet, which I have always disliked in itself, and dislike more because to my taste it clashes with every other line on the body. I hate the practice of sinking the headlamps in the front wings, which are the most vulnerable component of any car. Cloth anti-dazzle visors are obviously preferable to dark glass visors, which create peril in accidents; but they are notably inferior to green or purple celluloid visors, because the driver cannot look through them in emergencies. R. E. DAVIDSON

Week-end Competitions

No. 467

Set by Oliver Bell

We offer a first prize of Two Guineas and a second prize of Half a Guinea for the best account of the seven plagues of England. Competitors are asked not to be too political, to remember the laws of libel and to confine their remarks to 200 words.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, Feb. 17th.
2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.
3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.
4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 465

Set by Raymond Mortimer

We offer a first prize of Two Guineas and a second prize of Half a Guinea for the best English paraphrase of the following sonnet by Musset:

Que j'aime le premier frisson d'hiver ! le chaume,
Sous le pied du chasseur, refusant de ployer !
Quand vient la pie aux champs que le foin vert embaume,
Au fond du vieux château s'éveille le foyer ;
C'est le temps de la ville.—Oh ! lorsque l'an dernier,
J'y revins, que je vis ce bon Louvre et son dôme,
Paris et sa fumée, et tout ce beau royaume
(J'entends encore au vent les postillons crier),
Que j'aimais ce temps gris, ces passants et la Seine
Sous ses mille falots assise en souveraine !
J'allais revoir l'hiver.—Et toi, ma vie, et toi !
Oh ! dans tes longs regards j'allais tremper mon âme ;
Je saluais tes murs.—Car, qui m'eût dit, madame,
Que votre cœur sitôt avait changé pour moi ?

Report by Raymond Mortimer

An English version of a foreign poem should be judged, I think, not by its fidelity to the letter of the original but by its power to excite a similar emotion. In the case of this Musset sonnet, it was particularly necessary to ask for a "paraphrase" because the end of the poem does not admit of literal translation: the switch from "tu" to "vous" demands some expedient which no competitor had the ingenuity to contrive. Many merely neglected this change, which in the original is of capital importance; others wrote "thou" and "you," which is no equivalent. ("Thou" is not more intimate—it is merely more poetical.) A switch from a Christian name to a surname is the best English parallel I can think of, but nobody attempted this device, perhaps because it is difficult to put "Mrs. Blank" into verse. A possible solution would be to keep the setting French:

That you would change so soon I could not guess,
From my sweet Lise to "Madame la Duchesse."

Or, taking Browning as a model, to make it Italian or German.

But I find you changed in a trice from "Jacynth, my linnet, my life"
To Princess of Thurn and Taxis, my elderly cousin's wife.

I can imagine a charming poem, in which a Venetian paints the beauty of the Euganean Hills in autumn, with the last gold falling from the poplars, only to say how glad he is that the *villegiatura* season is over, and that he can go back to the Fenice and the cafés of the Piazza. (The "stali" and "premi" of the gondoliers would correspond to the cries of the postillions.) But, with one exception, the greatest licence any competitor allowed to his imagination was to turn the Louvre and the Seine to St. Paul's and the Thames. In the opening line Alfred de Musset paints a landscape rather in the English manner, and a number of competitors translated these into excellent Wordsworth or Arnold. But it seems uncertain whether the French poet was a careful observer of nature. William Bliss writes: "There is seldom an aftermath cut in England nowadays and you don't smell hay in the front of winter as I dare say you still do in France." Among a very large number of entries, the best were: Jack and Jill, Irvine Gray, F. D. Lute, J. H. S., R. H., Pibwob, A. W. Bowyer, H. S. Jaffray, Friar Tuck, William Bliss, T. Oupie, A. A. Dent, Violet Ormerod, P. J. C. Green, Yesteryear, L. F. Goldsmid, Guy Innes, Alan Baker, Mary Johns, Foirbos Macgriogair, W. R. Le Fanu, Robert Gaffikin and Uschebti. H. Hopkinson made a gallant attempt to transpose the poem into the present. Here is his beginning:

"GOOD AMERICANS, WHEN THEY GO TO PARIS . . ."

Gosh, is it swell, when the first cold day gets its knife in your ribs!
When cornstalks stub your toes, and a crow flaps, out in the field
Where the smell of the ozone you're getting is all raw hay;
And up at the big house they've started the furnace for winter—
Then—it's me for the city! I tell you, I came back last year
Just to get the same kick out of Paris—grayness and smoke and all.
I even went back for a look at the dear old Louvre, and a drink at the Dôme
(Say, what a racket the newsboys were making that day!)
This burg, with its crowds, always gets me.

But his concluding lines sank, when they should have risen. I wish, however, that other competitors had set themselves to write a poem in the modern idiom upon Musset's theme. I recommend that the first prize be given to M. R. D. and the second to Piekin, both excellent. But I am pained that not a single competitor made an honest effort to find an equivalent for the final *vouvoiement*.

FIRST PRIZE

Winter's first tremor: when the hunters' feet
Trample the stubble, leaving it unbent!
When magpies tumble over fields, still sweet
With the autumnal hedgerow's harvest scent!
The hearths are lit in England's stately halls:
And I remember how the other year
I came to town and watched the City rear
Slim spires around a winterbound St. Paul's.
I heard the vendors' voices in the wind;
I loved the streets, the river's slaty flow,
Pierced with a thousand lights. And I loved you;
Winter was you, and I had come to find
My self in your caress. I did not know
That hearts can alter as the seasons do. M. R. D.

SECOND PRIZE

I love the early quiver of winter, the gray
Stubble, unbending to the hunter's tread!
When the jay flies to fields of scented hay
The hearth in the old manor wakes to red.
The time of the town . . . Ah, when last year I fled
There once again, to all that proud display
(Still in the wind I hear the posthorns bray)
Of smoke-veiled Paris, and the Louvre's domed head,

I loved the passers-by, the days of rain
And, sovereign of a thousand lights, the Seine!
I sought the winter again. And you, love! you.
I went to bathe my soul in your deep spell.
I kissed your pavements. For—how could I tell,
Love, that your heart had proved so soon untrue?

PIEKIN

CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

PROBLEM 319.—THE ODDFELLOWS' BALL

"Ten of us," writes Joan, "went to the Oddfellows' Ball. A very enjoyable affair. There were Charles, Henry, Ronald, Walter and Mark; Doris, Kitty, Laura, Sarah and me.

"Charles can't dance with Kitty, nor can Henry dance with Laura. I can't dance with either Walter or Mark; Sarah can't dance with either Walter or Ronald. Doris can't dance with Ronald, and Kitty can't dance with Mark.

"Even so, there were plenty of ways in which we could all take the floor at once. Enough to enable us all to dance every dance, without ever twice pairing ourselves in precisely the same way. Wasn't that lucky?

"For the last dance but one, I had 'Mr. Turveydrop' (you know who that is?) for the sixth time. 'Young Lochinvar' (with whom I danced as many times as I danced with Mr. Turveydrop) was partnered by 'the young lady in pink.' She had already taken the floor six times with 'Henry VIII,' who, during the evening, danced three more dances with 'Anne Boleyn' than did Turveydrop. The last dance was the best of all. Three of the girls had the same partners as in the dance before. But I had my favourite partner; and—though I say it—we were the cynosure of all eyes."

Who is Joan's favourite partner?

PROBLEM 317.—CARNATIONS

Solution by Prebendary B. F. Relton

The question is of the possible distributions of 4, 3, 2, 1 to total 20. These can easily be written down

4	3	2	1		
5	0	0	0	=	5
4	0	0	4	=	8
4	0	1	2	=	7
4	0	2	0	=	6

etc.

Summing the results arrived at we find that the recurrence of the numbers is:

20	1	12	10
19	1	11	12
18	2	10	14
17	3	9	14
16	4	8	13
15	5	7	8
14	7	6	4
13	8	5	1

whence it is seen that whether the troupe consisted of 9 or 10 members, 14 different distributions would still be possible.

Hence the troupe consisted of 10 members.

PROBLEM 318.—WE WERE RACKING OUR BRAINS

Solvers have not racked their brains very hard; most of the solutions submitted are palpably not consistent with the data. In all these cases the expression "digital total" has been misunderstood. In the sense in which I use it, there is, for every integral number, a digital total expressible as a single digit.

PROBLEM 316.—THE MAD HISTORIAN

A set of Low's cartoons goes to J. B. Parker, York House, York Avenue, East Sheen, S.W.14. *Eight* points are awarded.

CALIBAN

PRIZES FOR PROBLEM SOLVERS

A set of Low's cartoons is awarded to the sender of a correct solution selected at random.

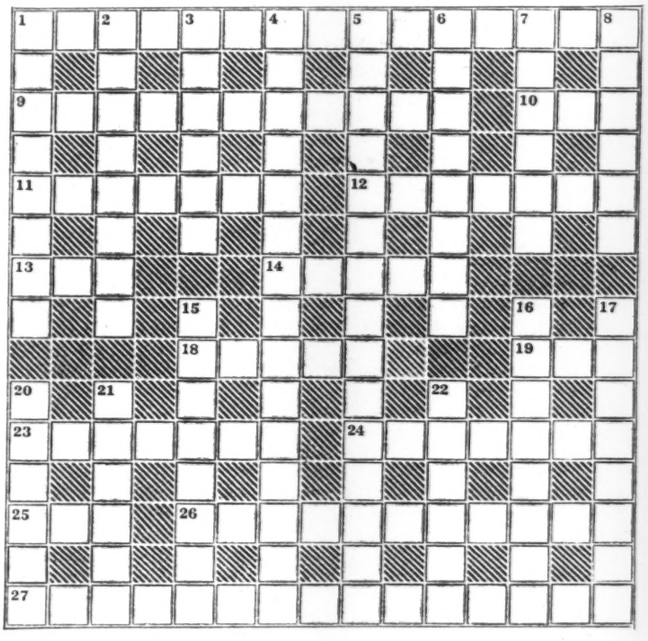
In addition, a record is kept of correct solutions sent, and of the points scored weekly by solvers. On attaining 100 points a solver is entitled to a prize consisting of any book (or books) reviewed or advertised in these columns, of a value not greater than 10s. Solvers who have won a prize on this basis are eligible for a second prize on attaining a further 120 points, and for a third prize on attaining a further 150. Solutions must be addressed to CALIBAN, c/o the Editor, and must reach this office not later than Tuesday week following publication of the problem. Solutions to two problems may be sent in one envelope, but on separate sheets of paper.

Some indication should be given of the method of solution.

[U.S.A. Competitors. The Editor regrets that the prizes offered in our Week-end Competitions cannot apply to American competitors.]

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 466

Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Turnstile, London, W.C.1.



Set by L.-S.

The last week's winner is

D. McLaren, Park House, Black Notley, Braintree, Essex.

ACROSS

1. Guns for a high class of work. (15)
9. The Board of course. (11)
10. 'Ades. (3)
11. Does this constitute a wind speed test? (7)
12. One line to a pope. (7)
13. What cowards do many times before they do. (3)
14. Pest that is able to be angry. (5)
18 (rev.) The Doctor's Happy young Family. (5)
19. A device for catching crabs it seems at times. (3)
23. Rank upon rank. (7)
24. Tremulous and half crotchety. (7)
25. Aspirate it for what one does with it. (3)
26. Its pupils are taught to be artful. (11)
27. "They and their bills, 'Arcadians both' are left To —— of another session" (Byron). (15)

DOWN

1. Where you would expect centres of population to be. (8)
2. Like the tooth the dentist killed. (8)
3. Covers one's lower extremities. (6)
4. Winning position. (15)
5. Cook makes it explosive and shrill. (15)
6. The nation of the Axis, terrestrially speaking. (8)
7. Has a sickly effect on the patient. (6)
8. [Why 10?—Ed.] (6)
15. He works at such a rate of course. (8)
16. The place to witness The Return of the Native. (8)
17. They grow on the Hog's Back. (8)
20. Swears in Court. (6)
21. Its mouth is on the South Coast. (6)
22. Philosopher whose thoughts were posthumous. (6)

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

F	O	L	D	■	A	N	T	I	Q	U	A	T	E	D
L	■	E	■	V	■	O	■	S	■	N	■	R	■	E
E	N	A	M	E	L	S	■	O	X	A	L	A	T	E
S	■	R	■	N	■	E	■	L	■	I	■	I	■	P
H	A	N	G	I	N	G	G	A	R	D	E	N	S	■
B	■	E	■	A	■	A	■	T	■	E	■	I	■	A
R	U	R	A	L	L	Y	■	E	N	D	I	N	G	S
U	■	S	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	G	■	S
S	A	L	U	T	E	S	■	B	A	T	I	S	T	E
H	■	I	■	O	■	E	■	R	■	H	■	T	■	V
■	A	C	C	U	S	A	T	I	V	E	C	A	S	E
S	■	E	■	R	■	L	■	D	■	O	■	B	■	R
T	O	N	N	A	G	E	■	A	U	R	E	L	I	A
E	■	S	■	C	■	G	■	L	■	Y	■	E	■	T
P	R	E	P	O	S	S	E	S	S	■	I	S	L	E

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By DIVES

BETTER MARKETS—RAIL SWITCHES—GOLD—AMERICAN UTILITIES

WHAT accounts for the extraordinary improvement in prices on the Stock Exchange? I observed last week that some new money had actually come into the markets after the "bear" covering which marked Herr Hitler's speech. This week the new buying continued and substantial rises were seen in industrial equities of the stable dividend class, to which I drew the investor's attention, the yield on which had become high in relation to the yield on Government stocks. There was no economic news to justify this bullishness, for the number of unemployed for the first time for three years has just passed the 2,000,000 mark. There were, it is true, some unexpectedly good dividend declarations from the home railways—the full 5 per cent. on Southern preferred ordinary and the full 4 per cent. on L.M. & S. first preference stock. But in the face of heavy falls in the weekly traffics this year these generous railway distributions are hardly any cause for investment satisfaction. From enquiries and observations I have come to the conclusion that the slight but perceptible improvement in investment confidence is entirely a matter of improved "political" confidence. The introduction of fresh blood into the Cabinet, particularly Lord Chatfield's, and the strong declaration by the Prime Minister of our solidarity with France seem to have impressed the City with the idea that the Government is at last speeding up the business of defence and is prepared to stand up to the Dictators. Perhaps Herr Hitler has after all lost his evil chance. At any rate, Whitehall seems very confident that British influence can be reasserted in Spain. This is good enough for the Stock Exchange "bulls," if not for me. I think they are forgetting the chances of an early General Election.

* * *

If the speculator took my tip last week to have a plunge in home railways, he would not have done badly. L.M. & S. 4 per cent. preference stock rose from 43½ to 51½ at one time, and Southern preferred ordinary from 53¼ to 62. Profits should at once be taken, for the Southern only earned 4.52 per cent. on its 5 per cent. preferred ordinary and L.M. & S. is not now earning the full dividend on its 4 per cent. preference. Great Western may pay ½ per cent. on its ordinary stock, without earning it. It is a pity that the railways have not conserved their cash resources. The investor should now consider some switching. I would exchange from Great Western guaranteed into Southern preference stock (although non-cumulative) and from L.M. & S. debenture into L.M. & S. guaranteed:

	Prices.	Div. Yield %.
Great Western 5% Guaranteed ..	104½	£4 17 3
Southern 5% Preference	90½	£5 12 3
L.M. & S. 4% Debenture	91½	£4 7 9
L.M. & S. 4% Guaranteed	80	£5 1 9

The margin between the yields does not seem justified by the slightly superior status of the senior stocks.

* * *

The Chancellor's statement on the Currency and Bank Notes Bill, to which the House of Commons gave a second reading on Monday, confirmed the City's first impression: the measure is an obvious piece of window-dressing designed to improve the appearance of the Bank return; it accords formal recognition to the fact that the Bank is now a mere appanage of the Treasury; it affords no indication of the alignment of our monetary policy. One illusion was, indeed, dispelled by Sir John Simon: the profit arising from revaluation of the Bank's gold will not be usable as windfall revenue to help out the forthcoming budget. The capital appreciation now realised is £95 millions. Of this sum, £9 millions will be used to make good depreciation of securities in the Issue Department (the loss relating, presumably, to the unsuccessful 1936 issue of National Defence Bonds), and the remaining £86 millions will be transferred to the Exchange Account as a "capital reserve." In short, since there is no change in the volume of notes in issue, all that the Bill does materially is to enable the fiduciary portion of the note issue to be reduced from £400 millions to £300 millions, thus raising the apparent gold ratio. The gold stock in the Bank will in future be revalued weekly, and fluctuations will be offset by transfers to or from the Exchange Account. Thus the Treasury will be as free as ever to allow the exchange value of sterling to rise or fall. The reception of the proposals in the gilt-edged market was favourable, and War Loan has moved up to £97 15/16. Suggestions have been made in some quarters that revaluation should be regarded as a step towards stabilisation, but the Chancellor gave no support to this view, which has no more substantial basis than the fact that a fall in the price of gold from 150s. to 140s. would involve the transfer of £16 millions from the Exchange Account to the Bank.

* * *

The announcement on Monday that agreement had at length been reached between T.V.A. and Commonwealth and Southern led to a spurt of buying of utilities in Wall Street and the Dow Jones index for that group penetrated on Tuesday last October's high. So far as this particular deal is concerned, T.V.A. is buying for $78,600,000 the Tennessee Power Company's electric properties, for which it offered, at first, $57,000,000, against $90,000,000 asked for by Commonwealth and Southern, the holding corporation. Mr. Willkie, the Commonwealth and Southern president, has seemingly induced T.V.A. to come rather more than half-way to meet him; but, apart from the question whether his corporation has made a good bargain, the important consideration is that, in endorsing the deal, the Government appear to have sanctioned a departure from the principle that private power interests have no right to "development values" and must be content to have their assets valued at original cost less accrued depreciation. If this apparent change of heart means a more conciliatory attitude on the Administration's part with regard to rate-fixing in relation to earnings on capital, utilities should advance further. I should be inclined, however, to counsel caution. At any rate, investors should confine themselves to a few stocks:—

	Present Price N.Y.	Est. Earnings 1938	Dividend	Gross Yield after deduction of 10% tax
Consol. Edison of N.Y. ..	33¼	$2.30	$2.00	5.34
American Gas and Electric ..	37	$2.25	$1.40	3.40
North American	25⅝	$1.60	$1.20	4.26
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A statement of the duties of the post and the conditions of appointment may be obtained from the undersigned, to whom applications accompanied by no more than two testimonials and the names of three referees should be addressed before February 25th, 1939.

STANLEY DUMBELL,
Registrar.

Feb., 1939.

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE EDUCATION COMMITTEE.

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City Education Office,
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